An Investigation into the Pedagogical Practices of a University WBL Course in Hong Kong

A project submitted to Middlesex University
in partial fulfilment of
the requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Professional Studies

FOK Siu Ki Raymond
BA (Hons), PGCert (HE), MBA, FHEA, FRSA, FCMI

Institute for Work Based Learning
Middlesex University

June 2018

Volume One of Two: Main Report

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to contribute to the wider field of work based learning (WBL) and its relevance to the world of work in different contexts. The research examined the teaching and learning on Middlesex University's WBL programmes at its Hong Kong WBL Centre. It explored enhancement measures to the pedagogical practices of its local delivery, seeking to discover the cultural factors that affect the teaching and learning success of the programme and to enhance pedagogical competencies of the tutors and pedagogical support of the students.

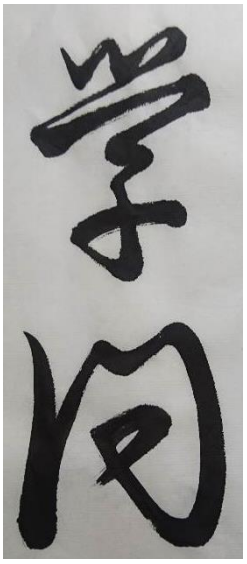
The research involved using a case study and a mixed methods approach. Data was collected using a set of specially designed questionnaires, together with a series of semi-structured interviews with related stakeholders, and a review of relevant documents. The outcomes include the empirical gathering of the perspectives of the WBL students and tutors on the teaching and learning and pedagogical practices and identifications of cultural factors affecting the teaching and learning of WBL programmes overseas which call for particular intervention strategies to address. These include understanding the characteristics of WBL and recognising its practitioner researcher approach for mode 2 knowledge production and professional development; managing the expectations of the students and offering them support to overcome the challenges for successful WBL; and adapting the students' learning style to WBL approach and implementing constructivist teaching practices. Recommendations were made including using the constructivist approach to adapt the pedagogical paradigm of the students and tutors in WBL and the cognitive apprenticeship instructional techniques to facilitate WBL. A new WBL programme for Hong Kong is outlined and an enhanced guide for tutors informed by Confucius Heritage Culture environments and the constructivist approach to learning.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to my DProf Adviser, Associate Professor Kate Maguire for her invaluable support, guidance, and advice on the research project. I would also like to thank my DProf Consultant, Professor Paul Gibbs for his intellectual insights. I would like to thank Professor Jonathan Garnett for initiating me to Work Based Learning.

My appreciation to the students, tutors, employers and professional associations who participated in the research. My thanks also to my colleagues, Michael Wong and John Curran, who have provided constructive opinions in my research journey. I would also like to thank Donna Tse who helped to generate and co-code nodes in the NVivo tabulation and Michael Chung who assisted coding the questionnaires in the Google Form presentation, and Christopher Hyde who proof-read the research report.

Finally, I am grateful to my wife, Anita for supporting me in undertaking the DProf over the years.



The Chinese word, 'knowledge' consists of two characters; the upper one is 'studying' and the lower one is 'inquiring'

Prelude

This research work has covered a longer period than would have been expected from a piece of doctoral research, almost ten years. I take some comfort from the words which one of the founders of Work Based Learning at Middlesex University regularly stated when new applicants arrived on the programme. *Your research does not start here, it started a long time ago*. (Professor Derek Portwood). I believe that I would not have been able to achieve the same depth of understanding of this research area if I had completed it five years ago. It would have been quickly out of date within the rapid changes that have taken place locally, regionally and globally that impact the repurposing of higher education not only in Hong Kong but in other countries across the world.

I was born and brought up in Hong Kong of Chinese parentage. My formal primary and secondary education were in Hong Kong supplemented by periods of post-secondary and higher education in the United Kingdom (UK) to complete my General Certificate of Examinations, undergraduate and postgraduate education. Currently I am working as the Head of Administration & Academic Programmes at Middlesex University's Asia Pacific Regional Hub and have been working at its Hong Kong Work Based Learning Centre (HKWBLC) for 16 years. I first trained in the programme before becoming a fulltime team member in 2002. Since then, I have overseen and been involved in the teaching of WBL students who are in middle or early management stages in their career. I have had the opportunity to observe and reflect on what works and what does not work, but have never done research on the role of the cultural context in the types of outcomes from the programmes and the evaluations received. Although the fieldwork for this research was carried out a year ago, the observations of the changes in contexts have spanned more than a decade. This research focuses on observations I have made in my role against a changing social political backdrop and the questions raised for me about the role of university initiatives related to learning at work in this context in which a model was imported from Britain.

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Appendices in Volume Two

Glossary of Acronyms

CEF	Continuing Education Fund
CHLC	Confucian-Heritage Learning Cultures
CPD	Continue Professional Development
DProf	Doctor of Professional Studies
EDB	Education Bureau
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
GBP	Great British Pound
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutes
HK	Hong Kong
HKD	Hong Kong Dollar
HKMA	Hong Kong Management Association
HKQF	Hong Kong Qualification Framework
HKSAR	Hong Kong Special Administration Region
HKU	Hong Kong University
HKU SPACE	Hong Kong University, School of Professional and Continuing Education
HKWBLC	Hong Kong Work Based Learning Centre
IWBL	Institute for Work Based Learning
MU	Middlesex University
NCIHE	National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education
NCR	Non-Local Course
PG	Postgraduate
PRC	People's Republic of China
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
TNE	Trans-national education
UG	Undergraduate
UGC	University Grants Committee
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

USA	United States of America
VTC	Vocational Training Council
WBL	Work Based Learning
WBL(MU)	Work Based Learning Middlesex University

Contents

Pages

1 Context

My research focuses on a form of professional development offered to professional practitioners employed in a number of local, national and global organsiations in Hong Kong (HK). I am responsible for the delivery of this United Kingdom (UK) designed Work Based Learning (WBL) programme. This chapter, therefore, explores the complex context and the locus in which this research sits. These include my personal and professional roles, the organisational context and my positionality as an insider in the research. They also include socio-political, economic and educational contexts of HK, including some HK and UK government policies on the knowledge economy and upskilling and the higher education (HE) and continuing HE market in HK. The chapter also provides the rationale and scope of my investigation, stating the research aims, objectives and expected outcomes.

Roles and Positionality

I regard myself as a part of the context in which the research is taking place. I have my professional roles for the delivery and overseeing of the Middlesex University (MU) WBL programme in HK and for the routine liaison with partner institutions. My observations in these roles over time have raised several questions and this is an opportunity to explore and challenge ideas and assumptions and arrive at some reliable evidence that supports change and indications of where that might need to happen.

Personal Roles

I was born in HK and completed my Chinese primary and secondary education in a boarding school. I then went to the UK to further my education, initially, studying at a boarding school for two years in North Wales, then spending one year at a College of Further Education in the Midlands to obtain sufficient ordinary and advanced levels subjects in my General Certificate of Education. I studied a Bachelor of Honours degree at its School of Development at the University of East Anglia and graduated in its first cohort of Development Studies. To

expand my skills and knowledge I then went to Bradford University to do an MBA and majored in International Business at its Management Centre and graduated in its first MBA cohort. My Development Degree and MBA equipped me with developmental process orientation and multi-disciplinary approach respectively.

I am also influenced by both Confucius and Christian thinking through my formative education from which I take the value that community and belonging are created through reciprocity and respect for all levels of society. I came from the traditional education backgrounds and had been educated in both the 'East' and 'West' environment. I have spent all my studying years in a boarding environment, which formed my independent but sociable character, I am a logical person with high integrity and not afraid of speaking out. After completing my post-secondary and HE in the UK, I then returned to HK and worked in various industries, which included manufacturing, administration, management training, real estate, retailing, and education, finally, making my late-life carer change to higher education (HE) in WBL.

Professional Roles

I joined MU 16 years ago and was not in the academic field before. I acquired my knowledge of WBL in an informal manner, mainly through 'knowing in action' and obtaining feedback from colleagues at the Institute for Work Based Learning (IWBL) and the local programme team members. Prior to making my late career change to tutoring WBL, I had worked in various fields and had been exposed to multi-sector operations/practices and transdisciplinary works. My versatile professional background has a bias toward human resources, corporate administration, and management training. I have an eye for detail, approachable personality, business maturity, plus academic training in the UK, making me a rounded WBL tutor. I thrive in my current role of programme leader in the delivery of the WBL programmes in HK and I enjoy sharing my professional experience with the students.

I am the lead operational and developmental person at the HK WBL Centre (HKWBLC or the Centre) for the delivery of WBL programmes. As the lead person, I have several professional roles at the Centre that include marketing and recruitment, academic leadership,

teaching and learning, and innovation and initiatives in the student experience. I managed a programme team that consisted of 2 full-time administrators, 8 part-time WBL module tutors, and some 50 plus part-time hourly-paid WBL advisers/project supervisors. I have developed good working relationships with the WBL students, tutors, and co-workers in HK and colleagues at IWBL. Throughout the years, I have developed extensive professional knowledge and practices on WBL programme delivery and management.

One of my major professional roles was to develop and build relationships and progression pathways with partner institutions for them to provide students to top-up to the WBL degree programmes, which include the School of Professional and Continuing Education, The University of Hong Kong (HKU SPACE) and the Hong Kong Management Association (HKMA). I have also joined some local professional associations to extend my network, and I am a fellow member of The Institute of Crisis and Risk Management (also served as its Vice President), The Hong Kong Institute of Directors, Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management (also served as member to its Learning & Development Committee), and the Hong Kong Quality Management Association. My professional roles and good working relationships gave me access to the WBL students, tutors, and some organisations (employers and professional associations) to obtain their perspectives and/or experience of the WBL programme delivery at the HKWBLC.

Organisational Contexts

Since its inception in 2000, HKWBLC has produced more than 1,200 WBL undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) graduates, the ratio is approximately 8:1. The HK market produced the largest number of WBL UG for MU and represents a huge market for the future. At the time of writing, the HKWBLC has only two local partnerships; namely HKU SPACE and the HKMA. The HKWBLC is interested in developing partnerships with employers to launch corporate WBL cohorts.

HKWBLC

The HKWBLC was set up in 1996 to market, promote and deliver the UG and PG WBL programmes in HK. It was an operational arm of the IWBL in the delivery and development of its WBL programmes in the region. The Centre was the University's largest International WBL Centre managed directly by the IWBL. One critical success factor for effective local delivery of the WBL programme is to have a team of experienced, competent, and committed tutors, therefore, staff development for WBL tutors is crucial. Most WBL tutors are practitioners in their own industries. They are not academic and many have fixed mindsets due to their senior positions and lengthy periods of service in their respective organisations and industries. In general, there existed a loosely structured organisation between HKWBLC and the WBL tutors. It is difficult to manage and motivate the WBL tutors individually because they all work part-time for HKWBLC. As the programme leader, I need to work very hard and in a professional manner based on mutual respect, trust, and constant communication and sharing of knowledge to keep the team of WBL tutors intact. However, there is a common concern, which bonds all parties together and that is concern for the students, and providing a quality teaching, and learning experience, which is central to the IWBL's and University's missions.

The HKWBLC's organisational culture is predominantly pragmatic, and as the lead person in the Centre, I need to walk a fine line between the various objectives of the University, IWBL, HKWBLC and education partners in maintaining the quantity and quality of the WBL students in HK. After 20 years of operations, HKWBLC finds that it has a limited number of educational partners, with stagnated growth. Many WBL students find the WBL programmes differ from the traditional education programmes, and are difficult to pursue. It is also difficult to find suitable WBL tutors to facilitate the teaching and learning of the programmes. The Centre would like to undertake a comprehensive study on the perspectives on the WBL programmes from its major stakeholders (i.e. WBL students, tutors, and organisations). This will inform HKWBLC transference of the Western WBL programmes to an Eastern place like HK, enhance its teaching and learning pedagogical practices, develop delivery capability, deepen its leading position as a premier WBL programmes provider in this region, and capitalise on the growing continuing higher education market in HK.

IWBL/Middlesex University

The National Centre for Work Based Learning Partnerships (NCWBLP) of MU was set up in 1993 and has become the UK's foremost developer and provider of HE in WBL tailored to the personal and professional needs of individuals and organisations. The University won a 1996 Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education for its NCWBLP's achievement in WBL and in 2005, the Higher Education Funding Council for England designated MU as a Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning in WBL. The NCWBLP was upgraded to become the Institute for Work Based Learning (IWBL) in 2007. The Institute emphasises the importance of building partnerships with the industry and it has a number of international WBL centres and interested in expanding its programme delivery internationally, particularly in corporate cohorts.

MU is an international university that values diversity, inclusiveness, innovation, responsiveness, quality learning experience, and excellence. The University is proud of its award-winning WBL programmes and its achievement of world leadership status in the research, development, and delivery of WBL programmes. IWBL and the University would be interested in expanding its delivery and assuring the quality of its WBL programme overseas, either through increasing operations at HKWBLC or developing new international WBL centre(s).

My Positionality

My positionality is shaped by several identities and roles, that shape my perspectives, perceptions, and values. Doing this research has brought them into the foreground and made them more explicit to me. I can identify myself as an insider-researcher, practitioner-researcher, and action-researcher (Anderson 2002). I am an insider-researcher because I am involved in researching in my own area of work in my own place of employment. I am a practitioner-researcher because I am carrying out a research project that is relevant to my role as a WBL programme leader. I am also an action-researcher involved in co-creating knowledge through a shared process, becoming an agent for change, and a learner and shaper of meaning (Pettit 2010). My positionality accorded me with several identities and roles,

which would influence my perspectives, perceptions, and values in undertaking this research. In addition, I have had over the years the support of my employer through the former Director of IWBL, guidance in the literature from staff at the now-former Institute, and in my research supervision team of an adviser and a consultant. Being insider-researcher has advantages and disadvantages. My combined identities and roles position me to take advantage of being an insider-researcher to undertake a work based doctoral project. They allow me to develop myself as a practitioner-researcher, to become a reflective practitioner and to create and use practical knowledge effectively. On the other hand, I need to exercise caution being an insider researcher at several levels, having various roles as the WBL tutor, the programme leader, with potential for bias. This is an area that will be explored in much greater depth in later chapter on its related advantages and disadvantages and implications.

I have both personal and professional motivations for undertaking this research. From a personal perspective, I have had the privilege of being at the interface of knowledge, cultures, and practices all my life. I am drawn to processes and procedures, to doing things 'by the book' which has always seemed quite safe and ordered. I have been challenged in my own thinking by what emerges for many candidates including myself when someone enquires into and thereby stimulates one's own interest into what really informs our practices and finds that it is much broader than following procedures. The lens I usually have on the world has been going through some changes, some quite subtle and others almost revelatory. Professionally, as the lead person in managing the HKWBLC, I am interested in examining the teaching and learning interface of WBL(MU) programme delivery, the major factors that differentiate the traditional education programme from the WBL programme, the pedagogical practices of WBL in the HK context, and enhancements on pedagogical competencies of the WBL tutors and pedagogical support to the WBL learners in the WBL teaching and learning processes in HK.

Socio-political, Economic and Educational Contexts

HK is a vast trading and transaction hub for southeast Asia and has been for several centuries the main connecting point between East and West culturally and economically. Politically, HK is a special administrative region of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Geographically, HK is located at the estuary of the Pearl River Delta, with a territory of 1,104 sq. km, consisting of HK Island, the Kowloon Peninsula, the New Territories, Lantau Island, and the other 200 islets (Census and Statistics Department 2011). As a result of the First Opium War (1840 - 42) and under the Treaty of Nanjing, HK Island became a colony of the British Empire. During the first half of the 20th century, the population of HK increased drastically. According to Pomerantz-Zhang (1992), there were 115,000 Chinese and around 9,000 Europeans living in the territory, and British education was introduced locally. HK was a refugee city, where most of the population had fled from mainland China to avoid the internal civil wars between the Communists and the Nationalists in the 1940s. The people of HK are self-reliant and used to continuous learning to climb the economic ladder.

Socio-political Contexts

The HK government's political structure consists of the Executive Council, the Civil Service, the Legislative Council, and the Judiciary. The head of the government - the Chief Executive of HK - is chosen by an election committee composed of 1,200 members and approved by the Central Government of the PRC. HK is one of the most densely populated cities in the world, covering a land area of 1,104 sq. km, and in 2011, the total population was 7,071,600, with an annual birth rate of 0.7% and a sex ratio of 876 males per 1,000 females. The life expectancy rate was 80 for males and 87 years for females in 2011 (Census and Statistics Department, 2012). About 95% of the people of HK are of Chinese descent. The remaining 5% was composed of a South Asian population of Indians and Pakistanis, some Filipinos and Indonesians, some European (mostly British) citizens, Canadians, Americans, Japanese and Koreans. There are two official languages in HK, one is Chinese and the other is English. In recent years there had been rapid immigration of a large number of mainland Chinese coming to HK for reunion with their families. In the primary and secondary schools, the government maintains a policy of ‘mother tongue instruction’, using Cantonese (a local Chinese dialect) for classroom instruction, and with Chinese and English in written coursework. In secondary schools, the government emphasised the proficiency of bi-literacy in Chinese and English, and tri-lingualism in Cantonese, English, and Putonghua. Putonghua-language education has been increasing.

Economic Contexts

HK is an international business centre, and the world's number three financial centre. In 2012, the government tried to promote HK as Asia's World City because of its international dimension. Due to the UN embargo against mainland China during the Korean War, HK ceased to function effectively as an entrepot but began its early industrialisation, which was led by textile and light manufacturing industries. During the period of the 1970s to 1990s, HK enjoyed an uninterrupted period of industrial and commercial prosperity. After China's Opening-up and Reform Policy in 1978, trades in HK increased even more dramatically and the economic link between HK and mainland China became stronger and closer. However, the manufacturing industry of HK declined with the rise of manufacturing in southern China, while the service industry experienced a high rate of growth both in the 1980s and the 1990s.

Today, HK is a leading commercial and financial centre in Asia. Its policy of free enterprise and free trade, the rule of law, a well-educated and industrious workforce and a sophisticated commercial infrastructure together with the opening of the Chinese market during the last three decades have strengthened HK as an international service and trading hub. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) adopts a free-market policy. According to the HK Census and Statistics Department (2012), the domestic exports of goods had reached HKD 4,978 million, re-export of goods was HKD 273, 249 million, and imports of goods were HKD 322, 932 million). In 2010, manufacturing only accounted for 1.8 % of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) while employment in manufacturing was 3.4 % of total employment. HK's manufacturing enterprises are mainly SMEs linked to large factories through an efficient and flexible subcontracting network that allows them to respond swiftly to changes in external demand. The service sector was 92.9 % of GDP in 2010 with a total value of trade in services of HKD 1,222 billion. In the same year, HK exported HKD 826.9 billion worth of services - a ratio of 47.4 % to HK's GDP, and it constituted a share of 88.4 % of total employment (Trade and Industry Department, The fact, 2012). According to the HK Annual Digest of Statistics 2012, the population of HKSAR was 7,071,600, with a labour force of 3,703,100, of whom 1,942,700 are males (52.5%) and 1,760,400 females (47.5%).

Table 1.1-1 Hong Kong Population by Occupations

Occupations	**Persons**
Managers and administrators	382,500
Professionals	245,400
Associate professionals	711,200
Clerical support workers	504,700
Services and sales workers	549,100
Craft and related workers	249,400
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	180,800
Elementary occupations	703,900
Other occupations	4,400
Total	**3,576,400**

Table 1.1-1 above shows that 'Associate Professionals' became the largest occupational group.

Table 1.1-2 Employed Persons by Industry-Based on Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification (2011)

Industry	**2011**
Manufacturing	132,900
Construction	277,000
Import/export trade and wholesales	538,800
Retail, accommodation and food services	577,900
Transportation, storage, information and communication	434,200
Finance, insurance, real estate, and business services	676,000
Public administration, social and personal services	915,400
Others	24,100
Total	**3,576,400**

Education System

Before 1997, education in HK roughly followed the British pattern. In the 1950s, there was a tripartite school system that consists of Grammar Schools, Technical Schools, and Pre-Vocational Schools. But after the handover of sovereignty to mainland China, reforms were implemented based on different needs. (Lau, Kan, and Wai, 2011). Prior to the education reform of the late 1990s, the HK education system included six years of primary education followed by five years secondary and a further two years to the Advanced Levels and a three-year university honour degree. It was an elitist system where students who were not interested in pursuing a university degree would leave at the secondary three levels, proceeding to vocational education or to the workforce. During that period, the progression rate for the secondary school graduates to the Advanced Levels was less than 50%; and the University education was open to only 18% of the age group cohort by 1997, and the Nine Years' free education was only introduced in 1997 (Cribbin, 2011). HK's public schools are operated by the Education Bureau (EDB), which coordinates all matters concerning education and administration of more than 1,000 schools. In general, there are three types of comprehensive schools: the public schools, the subsidised schools (including government aid-and-grant schools), and private schools run by Christian organisations. In addition, there are schools under the Direct Subsidy School Scheme and private international schools. According to the HK Census and Statistics Department (2012), the student enrollment by level of education in 2011/12 is as follows:

Kindergarten - 159,000
Primary - 326,200
Secondary - 487,000
Postsecondary - 296,800

In 2011, the HK government spent 68.274 billion on education. The HE sector is funded by the government via the University Grant Committee (UGC) that was in effect, monitored by the EDB. The UGC is responsible for providing funding to eight local universities in HK.

Some Hong Kong and United Kingdom Government Policies on the Knowledge Economy and Upskilling

A UNESCO report (2013) states that the Hong Kong government is faced with several pressures to launch initiatives for lifelong learning. These include growing globalisation and emerging new world economic structures, the fragility of the Asian economies as demonstrated by the 1990s' Asian financial crisis, and reunification of HK with mainland China.

Lifelong Learning

According to the Education Commission (1999), lifelong learning as one of the approaches to responding to these changes, and this needs to be adapted to economic, political, social and cultural developments related to globalisation. Kennedy (2004) also observes that because of globalisation, nations must compete with low-wage economies on price or add value through factors such as innovation, service, and creativity. It is necessary to have high-level skilled workers to be competitive in the knowledge economy and be continuously updated through lifelong learning. The Education Committee document entitled: '*Learning for Life and Learning through Life'* (Education Commission, 2000) spells out some reform proposals for the HK education system. It states that continuing education and lifelong learning serve several functions, which include realising one's potentials and enhancing the quality of the individual, enabling learners to acquire up-to-date knowledge and skills to stay competitive in the rapidly changing and increasing globalised economy. It also allows learners to acquire qualifications in academic, professional or vocational training, meeting their personal aspirations and occupational needs.

Following its consultation document entitled '*Review of Education System - Framework for Education Reform: Learning for Life'* in September 1999, the Education Committee presented its *'Excel and Grow: Review of Education System: Reform Proposal* (Education Commission, 2000), which put forward the following directions pertaining to continuing education:

(1) Provide flexible and diversified lifelong learning and mode of continuing education to cater to the needs of the community and align with the changing society's and students' aspirations.

(2) Set up a mechanism for quality assurance, accreditation, transfer and recognition of qualifications, among various continuing education/formal education /professional/vocational training programmes

(3) Establish the Qualification Framework with quality assurance, openness, and diversification, portability, flexibility, and transferability, and focus on the learning outcome

(4) Promote internationalisation of continuing education with more co-operation with overseas tertiary institutions in offering specialised programmes not available in HK to draw on their expertise

(5) Continuing education should be funded on the 'user-pays' principles

Upskilling

University WBL is an educational provision for working adults which is informed by discourses on continuing education and lifelong learning. In the last thirty years, there have been several UK government policies that have encouraged greater links between higher education and the workplace that have a direct bearing on the continuing development of the workforce. The Dearing Report (1997) challenged HEIs to design and deliver courses in collaboration with employers meeting the needs of the industry's markets and raising the nation's higher education participation rate. The Leitch Review of Skills (2006) addressed the potential shortage of skills in the UK economy by 2020 and considered different types of skill levels the UK economy could develop. The review put forward several recommendations, one of which was WBL, to increase the skills of those already in work. More recently the Richard Review of Apprenticeships (2012) put forward the re-definition of apprenticeships to meet the shortage of skills in certain sectors of the UK economy. The degree of apprenticeships was announced by the government in 2014. In 2015, the government pledged to create three million apprenticeships by 2020 and launched degree apprenticeships from September 2015 onward. The Apprenticeships Levy effectively implemented in April 2017, and employers will pay 0.5% of their payroll bill (offset by GBP 15,000) via PAYE to fund

apprenticeships for all companies. All these measures have opened huge market potentials and collaboration opportunities between the higher education sector and industries. It seems that both the HK and UK governments are interested in promoting lifelong learning and the upskilling of their workforce.

Hong Kong Higher Education and Continuing Higher Education Markets

There are fierce competitions among students to get into an undergraduate programme in the public universities. In addition, there are several private institutions that offer higher diplomas and associate degree courses for those who fail to enter a college for degree study. Starting from the 2012/13 academic year, HK's undergraduate degree programmes underwent a transition from a three-year to a four-year curriculum.

Expansion in Higher Education

The HK Education Commission (2000) proposed to convert the existing education system into a '3-3-4' academic structure. Under this scheme, in addition to the current six years of primary education, three years of junior secondary, three years of senior secondary and four years of university course will be offered. The purpose of the new scheme is to defer the process of specialisation and to broaden the scope of learning in universities. Another purpose of this reform proposal is to align local HE with that of mainland China, as well as following the world's common four-year undergraduate duration. In 1998, the then Chief Executive of the HKSAR, Mr. TUNG Chee-hwa, in his Policy Address, proposed that the HE participation rate for secondary school graduates would be increased to 60% within the next decade.

Promotion of Continuing Higher Education

In the HK government's Policy Address (2002), the HK government treated continuing education as one of the key vehicles to achieve the objective of changing HK to a knowledge-based economy and launched several initiatives to promote continuing education. One of the

key objectives was to implement the Continuing Education Fund (CEF). In 2002, the CEF scheme was launched with initial funding of HK$ 50 billion, and local residents who are aged between 18 – 60 can enjoy a maximum subsidy of HK$ 10,000 for their continuing education throughout their lives. The scheme was targeted at studies/courses on five designated growth industry sectors (i.e. Logistics, Financial Services, Business Services, Tourism, and Creative Industries) plus various Generic Skills in Languages (i.e. English, Putonghua, French, German, and Japanese), Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Techniques, and Design. In HK, the lifelong learning sector has its roots in the public universities' extra-curriculum departments, which were established in the 1950s that aimed at adult learning and continuing and professional education. Some of the schools of continuing education of the government-funded universities are the major players of continuing education; which include the following:

- The City University of Hong Kong - School of Continuing and Professional Education (CityU SCOPE)
- The University of Hong Kong - School of Professional and Continuing Education (HKU SPACE)
- The Chinese University of Hong Kong - School of Continuing Studies (CUHK SCS)
- Hong Kong City Polytechnics University - School of Professional and Executive Education Development (PolyU SPEED)
- Hong Kong Baptist University - School of Continuing Education (SCE, HKBU)

There are other self-financed continuing education providers. The Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK) has its continuing education faculty, the Li Ka Shing Institute of Professional and Continuing Education (OUHK LiPACE). The HK government has encouraged the development of self-financed community colleges to provide other options such as professional diploma and sub-degree courses (Education Commission 2000). There are other professional and non-academic bodies, for example, the Hong Kong Management Association (HKMA)) and the Hong Kong Productivity Council (HKPC), offer training and qualifications programmes and courses to the public for career development and lifelong learning.

The HK government also established a 7-level Hong Kong Qualification Framework (HKQF) to encourage continuing education and to provide learners with a clear articulation ladder to

their qualifications. Various Industry Training Advisory Committees have been established to set out the competency standards in their respective industries, and the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic Qualification (HKCAA) was renamed the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualification (HKCAAVQ) in 2008 to cover the vocational awards. Recognised qualifications can be obtained through academic and training attainments as well as other means. Starting from 2012, the HKQF began to accept Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) though only up to level 2, which is the equivalence of the UK Level 3 (HKQF 2017). The HKQF regulates award-bearing academic and professional education and learning and provides a progression pathway for learners to pursue continuing education at HE level.

Continuing Education in the HK Higher Education Market

The HK award-bearing continuing education in the higher education market is dominated by the trans-national education (TNE) programmes, which are governed by the Non-Local Course Registry (NCR). There were stringent requirements for the TNE programmes to be registered by the private operators or exempted by the Schools of Continuing Education of the local UGC funded universities. The basic requirements were that the quality of provisions in HK should be the same as that of the home country.

British universities were the largest providers in the TNE, accounting for more than 74% of the 853 non-local courses registered/exempted in HK (Euucation Bureau, 2018). British degree courses are very popular in HK, partly due to the quality and reputation of British HE, and partly because HK used to be a British colony until 1997, so the HK higher education system used to follow the UK model. In addition, the British undergraduate studies are of 3-year duration, and many of the local sub-degrees (such as Advanced/Higher Diploma) graduates would be able to claim ½ to 2/3 of Advanced Standing joining the UK 3-year programmes. The majority (59%) preferred to be taught by a mix of local and overseas teachers, followed by overseas teachers (20%) and local teachers (16%). Most students preferred to be taught in a mixture of Cantonese and English (Forestier, Ilieva, Course & Cheung, 2013).

Development of Transnational Education in Hong Kong

According to a report prepared by the British Council, Hong Kong (Forestier, Ilieva, Course & Cheung, 2013), trans-national education (TNE) has grown rapidly in HK following its Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa's policy address in 2000, in which he announced a target to expand access to post-secondary education from 33% of the age group to more than 60% within a decade. However, places in publicly funded undergraduate degree courses would remain limited to around 14,500 first-year places, catering for around 18 % of the cohort of secondary school graduates.

The speed of development of the TNE provision saw the government's target exceeded as early as 2005-06. The number of sub-degree courses increased from 20 in 2000-01 to 233 by 2005-06. By 2005-06, there were 32,570 sub-degree places available, and actual intake of 29,107. In 2005-06, UGC-funded universities provided only 1,680 second-year places in undergraduate courses for sub-degree graduates, a total that had increased by less than 200, to around 1,900 by 2010-11. They could cater to only about 10% of those completing sub-degree courses. With the UGC-funded universities offering such a limited number of senior-year places, overseas universities stepped in to fill the gap in provision, often teaming up with sub-degree providers to deliver the top-up courses. HK has become an important market for TNE provision. HK government statistics indicated that 38,000 HK students were enrolled in these non-local higher education and professional courses in 2011 (Census and Statistics Department, 2016). In 2013, a total of 1,162 non-local programmes were registered with the Non-Local Courses Registry under the Education Bureau. The UK was the largest supplier, accounting for 74% of the programmes, followed by Australia, with 11%, and the USA, with 8% (Education Bureau, 2018). As HK changed its high school from 3+2+2 (7 Years) followed by 3-year undergraduate degree studies, to a 3+3 (6 years) system, followed by a 4-year undergraduate degree studies. It resulted in a double cohort of high school graduates progressing to the first-year of university undergraduate studies in 2014. In response to the growing demand for senior-year in undergraduate studies, the HK government launched several policies to expand self-financed higher education provision. Changes included the move to increase the number of second-year places on UGC-funded undergraduate programmes from 1,900 in 2000 to 4,000 from 2012. In addition, the government encouraged the set-up of private universities by offering land and interest-free loans for new campus sites

and extending the student financial assistance that was available to those in the publicly-funded sector to those in the self-financed sector (EDB, 2018).

The HK government's targeted increase to the HE inclusion rate of more than 60%, together with its policy on continuing education and lifelong learning, created the enormous market potential for the TNE, and WBL (MU) provisions are under this category and governed by the NCR. Currently, we are partnering with the HKU SPACE and the Hong Kong Management Association (HKMA). The former is the largest continuing education provider in Asia with an annual enrollment of more than 500,000 while the latter is the largest management training provider in HK and the largest local business and management professional body.

Rationale and Scope of the Investigation

Rationale for the Research

Costley (et al 2008) observe that since the introduction of university work-based learning in the UK in the past two decades, there has been little empirical evidence to show how the university model of WBL is viewed, particularly from the perspectives of the learners and tutors, and there have been very few studies on WBL outside Europe. Over the years I have developed a passion for WBL and became interested in investigating the teaching and learning issues of this WBL programme. Questions arose in my practice relating to cultural factors that might be affecting teaching and learning in this context and how I could enhance the pedagogical competencies of the tutors and pedagogical support of the learners in the local programme delivery. In addition, HKWBLC has been in operations since 2000 without any systematic research on the current pedagogy to inform teaching and learning practices for the WBL tutors and learners.

Scope of Investigation

The WBL programmes of this research covered the Bachelor of Honours and Masters in Work Based Learning Studies of MU at its HKWBLC. According to Boud and Soloman (2001, p.4):

> "WBL is the term being used to describe a class of university programmes that bring together universities and work organisations to create new learning opportunities in workplaces".

WBL usually links to the work role and can be identified as three strands: learning for, through and at work (Seagraves et al 1996). This project adopts the above-mentioned definitions and the MU curriculum which will be further elaborated in Chapter 2. The curriculum of WBL at the UG and PG levels has basically remained unchanged with critical reflection as an effective means of beginning the process of learning from practice and experience in any work role.

Project Aims, Objectives, and Outcomes

My DProf project title is:

> *An Investigation into the Pedagogical Practices of a University WBL Course in Hong Kong*

Purpose

The purpose of my research is to examine the teaching and learning issues of the WBL(MU) programmes at its HKWBLC and explore enhancement measures in the pedagogical practices of its local delivery of WBL programmes.

Aims

There is limited research on the perspectives of tutors and learners in relation to the teaching and learning of the WBL programme, particularly outside Europe. This research aims to narrow this research gap and conduct empirical research on the perspectives of WBL tutors and learners towards the teaching and learning of WBL programmes at the HKWBLC, examining the WBL programmes' suitability and identifying approaches and practices to enhance pedagogical competencies of the WBL tutors and pedagogical support of the WBL learners.

Objectives

The research project has the following objectives:

(1) To analyse the major differences between the teaching and learning styles of WBL and the traditional formal education programmes

(2) To explore if WBL is a suitable learning approach for HK

(3) To identify enhancements of WBL pedagogical practices, to make it more appropriate to HK professional practitioners

Research Questions

The following research questions can be formulated:

(1) What are the major differences between the teaching and learning styles of WBL and the traditional formal education programme?

(2) Is WBL a suitable learning approach for HK professional practitioners?

(3) What are the suggested enhancement measures for WBL pedagogical practices, to make it more appropriate to HK professional practitioners?

Outcomes

It is anticipated that the following would be the outcomes:

(1) Gathering of the perspectives of the WBL learners and tutors on teaching and learning and pedagogical practices of the WBL(MU) programmes in HK

(2) Enhancements on WBL teaching and learning styles that are more appropriate to the HK professional practitioners

(3) Proposal for a new WBL programme

(4) Development of WBL tutors who are aware of the cultural differences in teaching and learning in WBL programmes in HK

(5) Enhancements of WBL pedagogical practices in the HK WBL programme delivery

(6) Inform the University on facilitating the transference of a Western WBL programme to a Confucius Heritage Culture environment

This chapter sets the scene and context for the research, outlining my personal and professional roles, organisational context, my positionality, and the HK socio-political, economic, and educational contexts of the research. In the next chapter, I present the relevant knowledge landscape that provide concepts and insights that support this research.

2 Knowledge Landscape

I needed to equip myself with more knowledge on the core and tangential areas of this research, through access to the wide range of literature which is presented in this chapter. The main areas I consider include WBL, international research on WBL and other models of practice or work-focused learning, practice pedagogies, academic texts on the nature of learning at work, cultural styles and cultural dimensions that affect teaching and learning, constructivist learning approaches and teaching methods, and the impact of context on pedagogies and delivery. I do not argue with the literature in terms of my professional experience during the review but summarise the main points at the end and the relevance of this exploration to my aim and the purpose of my research. The knowledge landscape highlights the complexities of the field of practitioner knowledge and learning at and from work which is necessary to understand before attempting to make comments on cultural appropriateness. This chapter will discuss the relevant literature and knowledge that have informed the development of the project, the importance of the topic, understanding of subject backgrounds, theoretical framework, and the research context of my research. Conventionally, a Ph.D. thesis might identify a 'knowledge gap' in academic literature, but practice research is more likely to look for knowledge to create new practices or solve a practical problem.

Exploring Work Based Learning

An overview study entitled 'Literature Review of Employee Learning' (Costley & Dikerdem 2011), suggests that there are knowledge gaps in the following WBL areas: international research on WBL, WBL teaching and learning and pedagogical practices, and WBL students' and tutors' learning and teaching experiences. Costley & Dikerdem (2011) also states that there is no critical examination of the theoretical underpinnings of the WBL pedagogy. It would seem important then to start with a history of Work Based Learning and to understand the version supported by Middlesex University that I am responsible for in Hong Kong.

Work Based Learning

Work based learning (WBL) is learning that takes place at, from or for work (Seagraves et al. 1996). This means that learning can occur at the workplace, generate through work activities/tasks and aim at enhancement of practice/work. WBL accepts that knowledge can be situated outside of the HEIs in the context of employment, paid or unpaid workplace learning (Cunningham et al., 2004). This perspective implies a paradigm shift in teaching, rather than learning being associated with knowledge transfer from the educational institution to the individual, learning is associated with practitioners studying on the realities of practices within a theoretical and reflective framework (Garnett 2016). WBL is a mode 2 knowledge (Boud & Solomon 2001), with its nature being tacit and proceduralised, situated and contextualised. WBL represents a required change of mindset that knowledge not only resides with the education institutes but also within professional practitioners. Therefore, the WBL tutors and students need to have a better understanding of the characteristics of WBL, major stakeholders, provisions and learners' needs, and benefits, impact and value of WBL to recognise its distinctiveness before effectively teaching and learning WBL. Throughout this research, the term WBL describes a curriculum in which learners are undertaking their studies at HE level with the majority of the learners being working professionals taking part-time studies.

Boud and Miller (1996) suggests that the WBL programme has several characteristics. These include forming a partnership between an organisation and an educational institution that involves the employees as learners; there is no pre-defined academic curriculum but one that follows the needs of the workplace; the learning programme will be individually-customised to each learner; learning takes place as an integrated part of work projects/tasks in the workplace. Boud's descriptions of the characteristics of the WBL programme mainly focused on the partnerships between the HEIs and the employers, with no fixed curriculum but follows the needs of the employer's workplace, though there is an emphasis on WBL being learner-centred and learning takes place in the work context. The delivery of the WBL programme in HK is currently targeted only at individual students and the HKWBLC has yet to partner with employer to launch the corporate cohort to diversify the portfolio of WBL provisions.

Brennan (2005) analyses the learning needs of WBL learners, which cover skills development that aims to improve performance standards; knowledge recognition and development through accreditation of APEL and project undertaking; and enhanced employability that prepares learners for work and lifelong learning. According to a study prepared by Costley, Shukla, and Inceoglu (2009), there are several reasons for individuals taking WBL courses. , It may enhance the individual's career prospects or improve their performance, WBL allows learners entry into HE through the APEL of their professional learning, it enables learners to enhance and enrich their professional practices, the WBL project facilitates learners to improve and innovate professional practice at the workplace, and finally, it allows the learners to achieve a WBL qualification that enables personal development and prove an individual's worth. Clearly there are several characteristics of WBL that would meet the learning needs of the professional practitioners but most of the HK students simply use WBL to obtain their degree qualification and not aware of the other benefits that the WBL programme can bring, particularly on employability that prepares professional practitioners on lifelong learning and CPD. As a WBL tutor and programme leader, I shall emphasise more of these in the future.

There are several major stakeholders in WBL interrelationships; the learners, the employers, and the providers, each of them has their respective needs and interests. Based on the motivations of the individual learner and/or organisation to invest in learning, Penn, Nixon & Shewell (2005) divide WBL provision into four major types of:

- To improve the individual's performance to get better career development in a different organisation
- To improve an individual's personal and professional development at an existing organisation
- To bring knowledge and skills to the organisation
- To improve the organisation's performance and competitiveness

There are several forms of WBL provisions, currently, we are only providing the WBL programmes to individual learners. Despite MU having introduced the WBL programmes to HK for around 20 years, its values and benefits not widely shared by the organisations, hence, as the lead person of the WBL programme, I shall be taking a more active role in marketing and promoting the benefits and values of WBL to the organisations. There are not as many studies as one would expect on the impact of WBL and other practice-related approaches.

There would seem to be a widespread recognition that it seems a logical and sensible approach. The next section explores some of these.

Benefits, Impact, and Value of WBL

According to the European Training Foundation (2013), WBL has various benefits for the learners, employers, and society. For learners, it provides hard and soft skills, technical expertise, and tacit knowledge to raise their self-confidence and self-efficacies. For employers, it produces higher productivity, gives staff work satisfaction, and addresses skills gaps. For society, it increases employability, offers an inclusive HE opportunity, and creates economic returns on upskilling and lifelong learning. Similarly, these benefits of WBL need to be promoted to the HK learners, employers and society.

Lester and Costley (2010) discuss the impact and value of WBL to its three major stakeholders: First, the University (provider), which increases inclusiveness in HE participation, develops the capability of an individual and provides more adult learning opportunities. Second, the organisations, which benefit from valuable WBL projects and their associated skills and changes. These create knowledge and augment intellectual/structural capital, bring organisational changes, and broaden employee development and increased their professionalism and motivation. Third, the individuals, benefit from effective personal and professional growth, acquire expert knowledge and skills that address specific workplace issues and increase confidence in further learning and development. As the WBL lead person in HK, I need to market and promote these impacts and the value of WBL to the local learners and organisation so that the MU can expand its influence in the region.

In this section, I reviewed the nature of WBL, the characteristics of WBL, its major stakeholders and provisions, the WBL learners' learning needs, reasons for undertaking WBL courses, its benefits, impact, and value. As my purpose for the research is to offer some small contribution to work based learning in a wider context through focusing on a case study of HK the next section looks at WBL in other countries.

Work Based Learning in Other Countries and the UK

There are various types of WBL with different meanings in different countries. Australian WBL is closely connected to its TAFE system, which is predominately Vocational and Technical Education (VTE). In the United States WBL is designated to cover courses for young people to obtain work experience. However, some North American universities refer the term in relation to their doctoral-level awards in specific professions such as the Doctorate in Education (EdD) and Doctor in Business Administration (DBA). In Europe, WBL is more focused on vocational training. The European history of WBL only began in the 2000s, after the Bologna Declaration of 1999, which aimed to establish comparability and transparency of a national higher education framework within the European Education Area (EHEA) by 2010. According to the European Universities Association (EUA) in a recent appraisal of the state of play presented to the ministerial summit in 2007, most of the institutions support concepts of lifelong learning to which WBL is closely aligned. The DEWBLAM (Developing Work Based Learning Approaches and Methods) partnership was formed with the aim of developing a common WBL platform and implementing different pilot programmes specific to the single partner context (Light 2007).

British WBL has its distinctive approach of using the learner as the subject of study, and their work role and workplace as the context. In this research, I have defined WBL in relation to the HE level of provision. There are two major types of WBL provision in terms of motivations of the individual learner and/or organisation to invest in learning. WBL learners' needs are varied, which may include developments in skills, knowledge, and employability. The significances of WBL can be highlighted by its benefits to the learners (developments of skills and self-efficacy), employers (productivity and talent retention) and society (employability, inclusiveness, and upskilling). WBL also creates Mode 2 knowledge which provides a huge alternate source of learning and knowledge. Because of its teaching and learning approach, WBL entails 'deep' learning that is engaging and lasting for the learners. There had long been a variety of WBL programmes at the UK HEIs, such as the sandwich course, and graduate placement. In 1993, Middlesex University received funding from the Skills Council to carry out research into graduates' skill levels and developed the current WBL programmes. Since then, WBL programmes have been developed rapidly. There are currently more than 40 UK universities providing WBL programmes, and the UK

government's implementation of Apprenticeship Levy will encourage more HEIs' provision of WBL.

Work Based Learning at Middlesex University

This section examines the significances of the WBL in MU in relation to its Strategic Plan and Academic Strategy, and analyses its curriculum and provisions, and teaching and learning strategies.

In its Strategic Plan 2012-2017, Middlesex's University's vision was: *'to become a leading university of choice, recognised internationally for excellence in all that we do'* (Middlesex University Strategic Plan 2012). Middlesex University is well known for its international reach and expertise and being one of the new (post-1995) universities, it prides itself on its innovative programmes, its emphasis on professional practice and its academic diversity. Middlesex also values student-centred engagement in the learning experience and actively promotes cultural, social, economic and educational diversity and inclusion. Middlesex University won a Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education for its development in WBL in 1996, and in 2006 the Higher Education Funding Council for England designated Middlesex University as a Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning in Work Based Learning. WBL was rolled out to a set of international centres of which Hong Kong was one. By 2015, Middlesex University had made significant steps in promoting itself as a research-oriented university and placed a strong emphasis on research over teaching. However, since 2015, the focus has turned more to enhancing the student experience through high-quality teaching. This was in response to fee rises for students, shifts in policy on the criteria for government funding of higher education, political shifts in the UK's membership of Europe, shifts in policy regarding international student mobility and rights and very importantly the role the student voice now plays in the market. It is noted that the concepts and related benefits and values of WBL align closely to the University's Strategic Plan, and the WBL provision can be regarded as an export that promised the potential to achieve excellence, as WBL has been internationally pioneered, researched and developed in the UK, with recognition through substantial awards and funding. As I manage a programme which is designed at Middlesex University in the UK, I believe it is important to

go into some detail about its design as it has emerged out of the primarily UK, Australian and American historical context.

The Middlesex University Academic Strategy (2015) spells out several objectives on learning, teaching, and the student experience over the 3 years period from 2015 – 2017, from which I have selected those relevant to WBL and directly relevant to this research.

- Student experience - that inspires students to achieve their potentials, increases student engagement and offers responsive student support
- Learning and teaching - that supports a community of academic practitioners, develops, recognises and rewards excellent practice in teaching and the support of learning, and ensures the university's approaches to teaching and learning and pedagogies are effective, innovative and informed by research.
- Curriculum – that reflects the Middlesex values, and informed by research and professional practice that is appropriate, engaging and meeting the needs of the students, and extending the academic reach of Middlesex nationally and internationally through the university provisions, collaborative provisions, and distance education.
- Employability – that enhances graduate employment prospects, providing courses that are relevant to professional employment and entrepreneurialism, and engaged with professional practices and/or employers.

It can be seen from the above summaries of the University's Strategic Plan (2012-2017) and Academic Strategy (2015-2017) that the provisions of WBL programmes are closely meeting many of the objectives of the University's Strategic Plan and Academic Strategy. I would like to research WBL pedagogy and pedagogical practices to inform practice and to assess my position before and since this strategic change in emphasis.

Middlesex University WBL Provision

This section draws on the work of Costley and Dikerdem's (2011) empirical study on the learning strategies of Middlesex WBL, to highlight the key learning in the core modules, and suggest ways to facilitate them. Middlesex is the pioneer and developer of WBL programmes

at the higher education level in the UK. It provides a wide range of WBS programmes, including Certificate, Diploma, Bachelors of Honours, taught Masters and research degrees at Masters and Doctoral level in Professional Studies.

Using David Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning as an over-layer to the WBL curriculum framework, a typical WBS learner would go through the following learning cycle/modules:

Concrete experience	Entry to WBL
Reflective observation	Review of learning with RAL Claim
Abstract conceptualisation	Programme planning and Research Methods
Active experimentation	WBL negotiated project

Hong Kong WBL Provisions

There are two cohorts of Bachelor of Honours and one cohort of Masters:

(a) BA/BSc (Hons) in Work Based Learning Studies (WBS) with RAL Claim

Students in this cohort usually complete a certificated learning course (from an Education Partner), and then articulate to progress to the Bachelor of Honours programme with an agreed amount of advanced standing to top-up to studying the core WBS modules (including getting a specific amount of un-certificated learning (via RAL Claim), before getting enough credits to graduate.

(b) BA/BSc (Hons) in Work Based Learning Studies without RAL Claim

This cohort of students follows a similar study path to the Bachelor of Honours curriculum, except that there would be no RAL Claim.

(c) MA in Work Based Learning Studies

This cohort of students joins the MA in WBS cohort after they have completed their accredited activities, which give them some advanced standing to enter the MA in WBS programme. They need to complete all the core WBS modules and undertake a WBL project to graduate.

Differences in WBS Provision Between HK and the UK

In HK, we do not provide the full range of WBS programmes, but use the WBL programmes mainly as top-ups, and focus on delivery at the Bachelor and Master's levels. Nearly all WBL

learners in London do not come to the campus to attend classes and study in a distance learning mode because of the area of inquiry or reflection in the workplace. However, there is frequent contact between the learners and tutors via telephone and other electronic means, such as emails and Skype. In contrast to London, there are several face-to-face tutorials for the HK learners, with the number of contact hours being defined by the number of credits of the modules. Because of the face-to-face tutorials, on reflection, I think most of our tutors are still using much of the traditional knowledge transfer mode of teaching and learning, rather than facilitating the students' reflective learning through professional studies on practices.

Teaching and Learning Strategies of Middlesex WBL

Costley and Dikerdem (2011) suggest that there are generally agreed common denominators suggested by some surveys (Helyer 2010, Garnett et al.) which suggest the use of typical learning strategies involving variations of the following:

(1) Review of learning and APEL (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning)
(2) Programme planning (Learning agreement)
(3) Research methodology
(4) Practitioner-led project(s)
(5) Reflection/reflexivity

Review of Learning and APEL

APEL provides a facility for experienced WBL learners to use their experiential learning to be recognised and claim for academic credits, which provides an entry point to HE. This practice had been recognised and accepted by the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA), which stipulated that: 'appropriate learning at higher education level, wherever it occurs, provided it can be assessed, can be given credit towards an academic award' (Garnett et al 2004 cited in Helyer 2010).

The WBL pedagogies facilitate the 'Review of learning and APEL' by using systematic reflection on practice and portfolio building. Tutors need to be familiar with the accreditation process and facilitate the learners in conducting their review and reflecting upon their learning and learning needs in relation to their work and future professional development. As

Lester (1999) suggested, the Review of Learning and APEL process can facilitate WBL learners to become 'map-makers' rather than 'map-readers', providing them with the capacities of evaluating past learning in relation to planning their future learning and development. On the other hand, the tutor needs to facilitate Reflective Learning for the learners, enabling them to undertake a strategic review of existing learning and an effective reflection on development thus far. On reflection, I think there had been insufficient training and development for the local WBL tutors on how to prepare the APEL claim. I personally had the benefits of coming from management training and various industrial backgrounds, so that I can use the 'knowledge-skills-attitude' training framework to facilitate the students to present their professional learning. However, this is only one way of presenting learning, the IWBL should come up with other frameworks of presentation to help students to prepare their APEL claim.

Programme Planning (Learning Agreement)

In learner-centred WBL, learning agreements are used between three parties, learner, employer, and university, to come up with a 'curriculum' matching the learner's learning needs. According to Costley and Dikerdem (2011), this tripartite' pedagogy breaks down barriers to learning by professional practitioners by structuring a learning framework and formalising their acceptance of workplace knowledge. The WBL pedagogies that facilitate the development of 'Programme Planning' involves using the concept of independent learning and the capability to link the past (prior learning), present (programme planning intent), and future (professional development) together. The WBL tutors need to be able to facilitate the concepts of capability and self-directed learning to the learners. This will envision, enable, and empower the learner to be an autonomous learner, negotiating their programme award to meet future learning needs and professional development. Looking back, I think the IWBL should put more emphasis on the concepts of capability, self-directed learning, and continuous professional development in an integrated manner to facilitate the professional practitioners to grow his or her professional self.

Research Methodology

In this module, the learners are required to learn the social sciences research methodology to formulate appropriate research design including research approach, methods, and tools to carry out WBL research. This module is also called 'Practitioner Inquiry', which emphasises

the dual roles of the practitioner being a worker-researcher and an insider-researcher. The researcher needs to pay attention to WBL ethics and the impact of undertaking the WBL project. The practitioner's position accords him or her with the 'positionality' of undertaking a WBL project, with the support of colleagues and the organisation. Ballamy (2008) suggested that it is through this negotiation of a research positionality that the worker-researcher may best achieve reflexivity. In addition, the practitioner inquiry requires the learner to explore the epistemology of practice by taking an ontological stance to investigate their practices for improvement purposes. The WBL pedagogies that facilitate the development of the 'Research Methodology' involves acquiring social science research methodology in formulating an appropriate research design, paying sufficient attention to WBL research ethics and the dual roles and positionality of the researcher, and adopting an epistemology of practice to general improvements or new knowledge through critical reflections. The WBL tutors need to be able to facilitate the learners' understanding and application of research methodology, positionality, and the dual roles of the WBL researcher to undertake the project, they also need to have an awareness of WBL research and using critical reflections on and after practice to create improvements and knowledge. On reflection, I think that we need to enhance the Research Methodology module handbook, making clear to both the local WBL students and tutors that knowledge is out there at the workplace, and it is through the practitioner research that one can improve one's professional practice and create knowledge. Once, this has been made explicit, the HK professional practitioners would embrace WBL.

Practitioner-led Project

WBL project is an essential feature of WBL programmes at HE level (Garnett 2005; Boud and Costley 2007). The WBL project is usually problem-based, with an aim to investigate some workplace activities for the improvement of practices. Armsby and Costley (2000), commented that there is often a need to develop learners' critical awareness of research issues and practical competencies in applying them, which can involve improving existing competencies as a professional practitioner, including co-operation, critique, reflexivity, pragmatism, and flexibility. As suggested by Boud and Costley (2007), the relationship between learner and tutor is typically more advisory rather than supervisory. The tutors need to be able to facilitate the learners on problem-based learning, which involves a high level of analysis and synthesis of information. In retrospect, I think the HKWBLC needs to have subject experts to serve as project supervisors that adopt a facilitative teaching style in

interacting with the adult working professionals and bring the professional practices and workplace contexts to the studies.

Reflection/Reflexivity

Reflection/reflexivity is an integral component of each of the Middlesex WBL modules. There are two major theories to the WBL programme: Kolb's 'experiential learning cycle' (1984), which emphasises 'reflective observation', and Schon's 'reflective practitioner' that exercises reflection on and after practice for the improvement of practices and/or new knowledge (1987). The tutors need to be able to facilitate the learners in reflective learning and acquiring and using the skills in critical reflection. On reflection, I think the HKWBLC/IWBL needs to enhance the facilitation of reflection/reflexivity of the HK WBL students and tutors.

Facilitation of Different Types of Learning

I have used the empirical study of Costley and Dikerdem (2011) as a theoretical framework to examine the essence of teaching and learning strategies for each of the WBL core modules. This reveals the related learning that needed to be facilitated and the pedagogical roles and practices required of the WBL tutor. In other words, the following facilitation of learning is required:

(1) Review of learning and APEL	-	Reflective learning
(2) Programme planning	-	Self-directed learning and capability
(3) Research methodology	-	Epistemology of knowledge and practitioner research
(4) Practitioner-led project	-	Problem-based learning
(5) Reflection/reflexivity	-	Critical reflective learning

In this section, I have explored the general WBL literature that presents the definition, characteristics, WBL's learner needs, major stakeholders and provisions, benefits, impact, and value of WBL. I have also examined WBL in other countries and the UK, WBL at Middlesex University in relation to its significance to the University's Strategic Plan and Academic Strategy, the Middlesex WBL provisions and curriculum, the teaching and learning strategies of Middlesex WBL, and the facilitation of different types in the WBL process. This is the programme that I have followed in my role in HK. Changes that have taken place in the UK

in the programme are transferred to HK. However, the work based learning landscape has been changing rapidly and that has implications for the UK WBL programme which now is working in a much closer relationship with organsiations. This closer proximity of HEIs and business and commerce has contributed to new trends in HE.

Changing Trends in Higher Education

There have been changing trends and emphases in HE since the publication of the Leitch Review (2006), which stresses the upskilling of the workforce meeting the employers' demands. The Review defines higher-level skills with regard to the knowledge to do the job. This plays down analytic and research skills, and theoretical ways of thinking, but such skills and approaches to study are necessary for lifelong learning in general, are essential to HE levels and crucial for continuing professional development as Lyons and Young (2008) observed. This section examines the concepts of self-directed learning and CPD, capability, employability skills (and how they relate to WBL), formal vs. informal learning and mode 2 knowledge production and finally the growing demands for continuing HE and its preferred mode in HK.

Self-directed Learning

Self-directed learning is a fundamental concept of adult education, and Knowles (1975) defines it as:

> "in its broadest meaning 'self-directed learning' describes a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies and evaluating learning outcomes'
>
> Knowles (1975, p 18)

HE studies require students to be self-directed and to take control and ownership of their studies. This will require the learners to understand that they need to play a more active role in their own learning and will require greater self-motivation and organisation and greater self-awareness of their learning needs and behaviours. The Higher Education Academy

(2014) suggests some measures that will facilitate successful self-directed learning. First, setting the foundations to find out the expectations of both students and the teachers and reaching a shared understanding of these expectations. This involves highlighting self-directed learning in the context of communities of learners and promoting the development of group work, study groups and on-line forums for support. Also, the use of formative assessment to guide the learners on the required learning outcomes and provide rooms for teaching and peer support. Second, providing ongoing support for teachers to use multi-media teaching and learning resources, enhancing connections between teachers and students in the classroom can motivate students to learn outside the classroom, providing opportunities for students to bring questions and observations for class discussions, reminding students of the different kinds of support systems available, and moving the role of the teacher to that of as a learning facilitator. Third, offering tools for self-directed learning to compile portfolio coursework, introduce a peer-mentoring scheme, provide study skills sessions, and give ongoing training in using online information. WBL requires self-directed learning, and many of the measures suggested by the Higher Education Academy (2014) are already part of the teaching and learning practices of the WBL programme. The ultimate aim of self-directed learning is to enable professional practitioners to have continuous professional development.

Continuous Professional Development

The UK Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) views:

> "Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a combination of approaches, ideas, and techniques that will help you manage your own learning and growth… it is a way of planning your development that links learning directly to practice. "
>
> (CIPD Website)

According to Crockett (2018), CPD can help professional practitioners to work to a high standard by maintaining and updating their knowledge to ensure they can meet new challenges. CPD has the benefits of providing an opportunity to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvements, keeping up with and managing political, economic, social and technological changes, increasing self-confidence and credibility, achieving career development, and enabling learners to reflect on learning, identify needs and to become more efficient and effective in learning. WBL embodies the concept of CPD for the professional

practitioner. Apart from continuously developing oneself, professional practitioners need to be capable.

Capability

Stephenson (1992) describes capability as being about intelligent judgment, ethical practice, and self-efficacy as well as competence. Capability is concerned with being able to do and having the potential to become competent. O'Really et al. (1999) put forward the notion of 'capable practitioner' which expands the ability to go beyond what would normally be considered competent into excellence, creativity or wisdom and to be able to exercise constructively critical judgment about right or best ways of doing things. The capability approach can be viewed as an open model that supports the continuous development of the learner and/or practitioners. Most important of all, professional practitioners need to be practical and able to apply his or her knowledge and skills to the employment context.

Employability Skills

In its survey on the business priorities for education and skills, the Confederation of British Industry (2010) has stressed the importance of essential skills for employment, which will mean young people who graduate from the schools/colleges will be literate, numerate and employable when entering the workforce. There are several such workplace skills:

- Application of IT
- Team working
- Application of numeracy
- Business & customer awareness
- Problem-solving
- Communication and literacy

The survey reflected the general employers' view that graduates need more than a good degree to be successful in the workplace, they also need employability skills, and there should be a closer connection between work and learning.

Major Differences Between Formal and Informal Learning

According to Resnick (1987), there are some major differences between college (e.g. a traditional classroom education) learning and out-of-college learning. The college provisions are formal learning, which is different from informal learning such as WBL in several aspects:

- College practices are mostly based on individual activities, while much informal learning activities are socially shared
- College work emphasises mental activities whereas in real life people use a wide variety of tools
- College learning is characterised by the subject discipline knowledge, while informal learning is characterised by contextualised reasoning
- College learning aims at the acquisition of generalised skills and principles while informal learning develops situation-specific competencies.

Tynjala (2008) presents the differences between formal learning and informal learning in the table below:

Table 2.2 Differences Between Formal Learning and Informal Learning

Learning in formal education	**Learning in the workplace**
Intentional (plus unintentional)	Unintentional (plus intentional)
Prescribed by the formal curriculum, competency standards, etc.	Usually no formal curriculum or prescribed outcomes
Uncontextualised - characterised by symbol manipulation	Contextual - characterised by contextual reasoning
Focused on mental activities	Focused on tools use plus mental activities
Produces explicit knowledge and generalised skills	Produces implicit and tacit knowledge and situation-specific competences
Learning on teaching and content of teaching	Learning outcomes less predictable

Emphasis on teaching and content of teaching	Emphasis on work and experience based on learners as a worker
Individual	Collaborative
Theory and practice traditionally separated	Seamless know-how, practical wisdom
Separation of knowledge and skills	Competences treated holistically, no distinction between knowledge and skills

There are differences between learning in universities and workplaces. In the universities, teaching and learning are based on knowledge production from university research and most universities organised their research and knowledge production according to the structure of disciplines. This disciplinary structure has been formalised in the universities, which is the Mode 1 knowledge production. Whereas, at the workplace, there is also the knowledge production in the context of the application, which is termed Mode 2 knowledge production, and can be included as a resource for learning and education. Hence, professional practitioners can be offered a choice between university-based programmes with pre-defined academic content or a workplace-based learning programme with a learning content based on application-oriented knowledge.

Mode 1 and Mode 2 Knowledge

WBL is a mode 2 knowledge (Boud & Solomon 2001), with its nature of being tacit and proceduralised, it is situated and contextualised. The name of Mode 2 knowledge production is coined in ’The New Production of Knowledge (Gibbons et al. 1994). The main point of the study is the emergence of a knowledge production system that is ‘socially distributed’. While knowledge production used to be located primarily at academic, government and research institutions and structured by scientific disciplines, its new locations, practices, and principles are much more heterogeneous. Gibbon et al. (1994) explains the two different forms of knowledge creation. Mode 1 knowledge represents the traditional academic knowledge produced in the university, and mode 2 knowledge represents the production of knowledge that is socially constructed and accepted during reflection. Mode 2 knowledge is a form of WBL knowledge, which is transdisciplinary and contextualised within the organisational

setting (Gibbons 1998).

According to MacLean, MacIntosh and Grant (2002) there are five main features of mode 2 knowledge production:

(1) Knowledge produced in the context of application

Mode 2 knowledge is generated in the context of the application. This emphasises the problem-solving nature of mode 2 knowledge where production is organised around a particular application as opposed to the codes of practice of a particular discipline.

(2) Transdisciplinarity

Transdisciplinary problem solving involves the integration of different skills in a 'framework of action' (Gibbons *et al.*, 1994, p.4), and once this has been resolved and a theoretical consensus is attained, it cannot easily be reduced to disciplinary parts, and the research results diffuse to problem contexts and practitioners during the process of knowledge production.

(3) Heterogeneity and organisational diversity

Mode 2 knowledge is produced in a diverse variety of organisations resulting in a very heterogeneous practice. These organisations are linked through networks of communication and research is conducted in mutual interaction.

(4) Social accountability and reflexivity

Mode 2 knowledge production involves reflexivity in its dialogic process that is capable of incorporating multiple views. The researcher needs to be aware of the societal consequences of their work (social accountability) and be sensitive to the impact of the research from the beginning of the project.

(5) A diverse range of quality controls

The quality of mode 1 knowledge production is judged from the standpoint of the traditional discipline-based peer review processes, whereas, in mode 2, quality control has to reflect the concerns of a substantially broader community of interest.

It is recognised that the workplace regards Mode 2 knowledge as a significant advantage in employees, and continuing professional development is a requirement for many employees who expect to develop a focus on both technical upskilling and knowledge advancements. The HK professional practitioners are no exception. In addition, there are other major differences between the traditional education programme and the WBL programme which include the learner customising individual learning needs, accrediting prior experiential learning, being involved in programme planning, negotiating learning outcomes, conducting practitioner inquiry, and undertaking a WBL project.

Changing Demand for Continuing Higher Education in Hong Kong

HK continuing education (award-bearing) in the higher education market is dominated by transnational education (TNE) programmes. As stated in the survey report prepared by Forestier, Ilieva, Course & Cheung (2013), British universities were the largest providers in the TNE, accounting for more than 60% of the 1,162 non-local courses registered/exempted in HK (Education Bureau, 2013). British degree courses are very popular in HK, partly due to the quality and reputation of British higher education, and partly because HK used to be a British colony until 1997, so the HK higher education system used to follow the UK model. In addition, British undergraduate studies are of 3-year duration, and many of the local sub-degrees (such as Advanced/Higher Diploma) graduates would be able to claim ½ to 2/3 of Advanced Standing joining the UK 3-year programmes. The majority (59%) preferred to be taught by a mix of local and overseas teachers, followed by overseas teachers (20%) and local teachers (16%). Most students prefer to be taught in a mixture of Cantonese and English.

Below are the summarised finding by an HKU SPACE Survey (with 5,703 respondents) about the Demand for Continuing Education in Hong Kong (Cribbin 2010):

(1) The overall continuing education participation rate among HK residents (age 18 - 64) was 28% in 2009; the rate represented a projected learner population of 1.39 million. And the estimated annual expenditure for continuing education was HKD 14.4 billion in 2009
(2) The average annual personal expenditure for further studies was HKD 10,385
(3) Among all adult learners, 70% were full-time workers

(4) Demand for continuing education aged 18 to 24 was the strongest (46%) among all age group

(5) Non-award bearing courses (56%) were the most pursued category among adult learners, followed by the category of Certificate, Diploma, and Advanced/Higher Diploma programmes

(6) More learners indicated stronger interest in pursuing continuing education for "Personal interest" (44%) than for "Improvement in work capabilities" (39%. The third motive was for "Learning new skills" (22%)

(7) "language" (19%) was the most popular subject among learners. The second and third most popular subjects were "Arts/music/performing arts" (9%) and "Business Management" (9%)

(8) Over 40% of adult learners benefited from the government CEF (Continuing Education Fund), and about 24% of the adult learners received sponsorships from their employers

(9) About 64% indicated that studying is necessary at times of economic downturn, and 70% said that further studies are necessary to enhance work competitiveness during adverse economic conditions, and 70% agreed that taking continuing education courses are necessary at times of economic recovery

(10) Only 40% of adult learners showed a positive attitude toward online learning. Flexible learning time (48%) and flexible learning places (31%) were the main perceived benefit of online learning

Hong Kong is at the crossroads of east and west and a thriving commercial centre has a wide range of educational facilities to draw from. It has well-respected universities and colleges. However, for those seeking to advance their careers through exposure to the realities of global shifts in what is required for successful corporations in an interconnected world, the rapid pace of working life and commercial drive makes it difficult for employees to take time out to attend educational institutions abroad. There are significant geographical distances as well as monetary and work inhibitors. Distance Learning and more recently with advances in technology blended learning can be an attractive option but it comes with serious disadvantages as well as advantages.

Distance Learning in HK

According to Holmberg (1977, p.9), distance learning can be defined as:

> "… the various forms of study at all levels which are not under the continuous, immediate supervision of tutors present with their students in lecture rooms or on the same premises, but which, nevertheless, benefit from the planning, guidance, and tuition of a tutorial organisation".

Knowles (1975), put forward some principles of adult learning and argued that adults learn differently from children. One of the distinctive features of an adult is their attitude towards 'self-directed learning', and Moore (1980) echoes this view that adult learners are independent learners who are autonomous and self-directed. There are several factors that influence effective distance learning:

(a) Transaction Distance

Moore (2013) suggest that the term, 'distance' in education is not defined by the geographic distance between the tutor and the learner, but by the quality of the instructional design. This 'transactional distance' refers to the relationships between tutor and learner in independent learning.

(b) Establishing Dialogue

In relation to Moor's transactional distance, Holmberg (1999) introduces the concept of 'didactic conversation', which explains how distance tutors should communicate with their learners to make certain that learning takes place. According to Peters (1998), maintaining a dialogue with the learners is very important in distance learning, which is part of the pedagogical function.

(c) Learner Isolation

In most of the distance learning situations, the leaners are isolated in terms of the frequency of face-to-face contact with the tutor, which may result in a sense of isolation (Venter, 2003). There are different kinds of isolation from the tutor as a source of learning, for receiving feedback, and lack of a structure to studies.

In 'Lifelong in Action, Hong Kong Practitioners' Perspectives' (2002), edited by Cribbin and Kennedy, the most common model of distance learning whether they are provided locally or

with overseas providers, is described thus:

> "Local tuition is provided go support distance learning materials, be this print-based or online. The local support may be locally sourced or maybe via visiting academic staff from overseas (and is often a combination of both). The possibility of purely correspondence education exists as does the option of purely online courses but in a compact place like Hong Kong, it is relatively simple to organise face-to-face support and this is generally the preference of the learners".
>
> (Cribbin, 2002, p. 27 - 28)

It can be seen from the literature that the British TNE is a popular form of continuing HE progression in HK, and the local students prefer some face-to-face contact in the delivery of this kind of programme. In delivering the TNE programmes, we have to pay attention to the requirements for effective distance learning, which include transaction distance, the establishment of dialogue, and learner isolation. In the current delivery of the WBL programme, we stress establishing supportive relationships, maintaining communications and ensuring some forms of face-to-face contact at the tutorial between the tutor and the students.

Cultural Differences in Teaching and Learning

According to Owens (1978), culture is what one thinks is important (values); what one thinks is true (beliefs); and how one perceives things are done (norms). Culture directly affects the principles of teaching and learning, epistemology beliefs (Chan & Elliot, 2002) and learning styles (Kennedy, 2002). This section examines the issues of cultural differences in teaching and learning relating to the delivery of the WBL programme in HK.

Eastern Versus Western Learning Approaches

Learning Consider within a Cultural Context

Roger & Lewhman (2002) present a Confucian-Socratic framework to analyse culture's influence on learning. Socrates, a Western exemplar, valued private and public questioning of widely accepted knowledge and expected students to evaluate others' beliefs and to generate

and express their own hypothesis. Confucius, an Eastern exemplar, valued the effortful, respectful, and pragmatic acquisition of essential knowledge as well as behavioral reforms.

Eastern versus Western Learning Approaches

According to Li (2012), there are different learning approach to learning between the eastern and western worlds. The Chinese students have inherited the Confucian learning tradition which holds to the following ideas:

- Learning is the most important thing in life; it is life's purpose
- Learning enables one to become a better, not just smarter, person. The ultimate purpose of learning is to self-perfect and contribute to others at the same time
- Leaning is a lifelong process
- The kind of knowledge that sets a person apart from another does not come to one automatically
- One must seek it and seeking knowledge requires resolve, diligence, enduring hardship, steadfastness, concentration, and humility

Li (2012, p.14)

In contrast, the students from Western cultures have a different approach to learning which follows the below themes:

- Human curiosity about the external world is the inspiration for knowledge
- A relentless spirit of inquiry into the universe will lead to knowledge
- The mind is the highest human faculty that enables this inquiry
- Reason (not the heart) is the process by which we know the world
- The individual is the sole entity for inquiry, discovery and ultimate triumph

Li (2012, p.15)

There may be insufficient research among Western education providers of the cultural heritage of the countries where they set up their courses and programmes. In the case of HK, the cultural heritage is Confucian, and Confucian had much to say about education, its purpose and the value of work. The Hong Kong Chinese have been brought up with such values and are still to a certain degree shaped by them. The following section might go some way to demonstrating the importance of cultural heritage in learning styles and influences.

2.3.2 Confucian Thinking on Education and Learning

Chinese education and learning traditions have been influenced by Chinese culture in general and Confucianism for centuries. Adopting Lee's (1996) analyses on the Chinese learning in Confucian traditions, Wang (2006) examines and presents the following Confucian conceptions on learning, which could be in alignment with some of the major characteristics of WBL:

Significance of Education

There is a high value placed by Chinese society on education, which is perceived as important for both personal improvement and social development – WBL impact personal and professional, and social development.

Educability for All and Perfectibility for All

The high status of education in the Confucian tradition rest upon the presumption that everyone is educable – WBL is inclusive education

Learning, Effort, Will Power, and Human Perfectibility

The concept of the attainability of human perfectibility is expressed in terms of the sagehood in the Confucian tradition and is closely related to education. To the Confucianism, education, and learning are always associated with efforts. Self-determination or will-power is the driving force of efforts – WBL produces continuous improvements

Intrinsic motivation of Learning: Learning for Self-realisation

The notion of learning for the sake of one's self means self-cultivation which best signifies the individualistic orientation in education in the Confucian tradition. The process of learning is, therefore, an inner-directed process, which is similar to Marlow's concept of 'self-actualisation' – WBL aims at perfecting the practices.

Deep Approach to Learning: Promoting Reflection and Enquiry

Confucian traditions of learning and teaching also emphasises deep as opposed to superficial knowledge. As education in the Confucian tradition is considered important for its intrinsic

value, it is by nature inclined towards the deep approach rather than the surface approach to learning – WBL generates through inquiry and critical reflections.

Achievement Motivation in Learning

Confucian tradition not only places emphasis on the intrinsic value of education and learning but also on the dimension of external manifestation and utility of learning – WBL is practical knowledge

From the above discussions, it seems that there is a convergence of thoughts between the Confucian traditions on education and the Western characteristics of WBL; hence, the division on the cultural differences between the two may not be insuperable.

Characteristics of the Chinese Learner

The term Chinese learner has been applied loosely as an umbrella term to refer to all students from Chinese-speaking backgrounds or even all those who share Confucian heritage culture (CHC). The CHC is dominant in China and other countries influenced by China in the region's long history (Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, and Vietnam). As a result, students from East Asia, in general, have been broadly defined as coming under the umbrella of the "Chinese learner" (Watkins & Biggs, 1996).

Characteristics of Chinese Learners

There had been some research and studies which seem to indicate that the Chinese students tend to be dependent learners relying on their teachers to provide content materials. Chan (1999) points out the Chinese learners tend to be passive learners seldom ask questions in class. The students also depend more on teachers for information and reply more in the use of rote learning. (Ballad and Clanchy, 1997). Chinese learners are quiet and passive in the classroom as questioning in class is not encouraged (Chan 1999). It is believed that the Chinese learning environments hold a highly didactic conception of teaching, with teachers expected to transmit knowledge, and students taking a silent, passive role.

Confucian Heritage Culture Students' Characteristics of Learning

On (1996) and Ballard and Clanchy (1997) highlight the CHC students' characteristics of learning that they attend all classes, take detailed notes, and are highly motivated to succeed; they are respectful of the teacher's authority and preoccupied with fulfilling the expectations of the teacher; they seldom contribute to class discussions; and only ask questions for clarity on a one on one basis with the lecturer. Some studies reported that CHC students are lack of autonomy, criticality, reflexivity, and originality of thought (Greenholz, 2003). Following on these characteristics, Haller, Fisher & Gapp (2007) identify three predominant aspects of CHC students' approach to learning and teaching:

- they expect a highly structured relationship with their teachers
- they tend to use a collective and collaborative approach to learning
- they tend to be deep learners rather than rote learner, with a focus on reflective practices

Teacher-student Relationship

In a study about teaching and learning in HK, Salili (2001) finds that teacher-student interaction is influenced by norms of behaviour, value, and belief that exist in culture. Teachers in Chinese schools are considered authorities, and thus superior beings. Students are subsequently taught to respect, obey, listen, follow instructions, and not to challenge teachers. It is embedded in the Confucian tradition that students should be brought up to respect the expertise of parents and teachers (Chan, 1999).

Collective and Collaborative Learning

CHC is marked by collectivism and is centred on obedience and loyalty towards the family. In collective cultures, extended families or groups protect their members in exchange for loyalty. The individual derives his or her identity from the social group rather than his or her own attributes. In such a culture, achievement through cooperation and mutual dependence is encouraged (Hostede, 1986). Tang (1996) suggests that CHC students structure their learning around small groups involving collaboration and cooperation, who work collaboratively, seeking each other's cues, perceptions, and views on how to handle unfamiliar situations.

Deep Learning Approach and Use of Reflective Practices

Education in the Confucian tradition is considered important for its intrinsic value and inclined to have a deep learning approach rather than a surface approach (On, 1996). Confucius himself saw learning as deep: “To study without thinking is futile. To think without studying is dangerous” (Leys, 1997)

Some Recent Interpretations on Characteristics of the Chinese Learner

The conception of ‘Chinese learner’ risks generalisation and stereotyping and there have been some recent reinterpretation and new understandings of Chinese learning and teaching.

Confucian Confusions

Biggs (1991) comments that the Confucian tradition, in fact, emphasises a deep approach to learning

> “Confucius saw learning as deep: “seeing knowledge without thinking is labour lost; thinking without seeking knowledge is perilous (Analects), his methods were individual and Socratics, not expository: his aim was to shape social and familial values in order to conserve a particular political structure. These do not appear particularly conducive to surface learning”.
>
> Biggs (1991, p. 30)

In fact, the Chinese term “knowledge” is made up of two characters: one is ‘studying’ and the other one is ‘inquiring’. This means that the action of inquiring and questioning is central to the quest for knowledge. Kennedy (2002) indicates some existing” Confucian confusions”. Although the “Confucian values” of collectivism and conformity are often stressed in the research literature on “the Chinese learner”, it should be noted that Confucian also emphasises individuality in learning, “learning for the sake of the self”. Education is only meaningful if it leads to the perfection of the self; “the purpose of learning is, therefore, to cultivate oneself as an intelligent, creative, independent, autonomous, ad authentic being” (Kennedy 2002, p. 432). Confucius also “promoted reflection and inquiry” in the learning process.

Memorising and Understanding

Many Chinees teachers and students do not see memorizing and understanding as separate but rather as interlocking processes, and high-quality learning outcomes usually require both processes (Biggs, 1996). Contrary to the commonly held opinion that Chinese learner emphasises rote-learning, memorization is considered a significant part of learning in the Confucian tradition. Memorisation should not be equated with rote-learning (Lee, 1996). The study of Dahlin and Watkins (2000) on Chinese learners has sought to draw a clearer distinction between the rote-learning process (mechanic learning without meaning) and petition for "deep memorizing" of content. The Western students saw understanding as usually a process of sudden insight. Chinese students typically thought of understanding as a long process that required considerable mental effort. A particular aspect of the "paradox of the Chinese learner" is the relationship between memorsing and understanding. Chinese students are perceived as passive learners yet show a high level of understanding (Watkin & Biggs, 2001). In other words, memorization has never been an end but as a prelude to deeper understanding.

A Family Relationship between Student and Teacher

In the Confucian tradition, the student-teacher relationship is of hierarchical and formal, where the student has high respect for the teacher. According to Jin & Cortazzi (1998), the typical method of teaching is not simply the transmission of superior knowledge but uses considerable interactions in a mutually accepted social context. The teacher's manner might appear to be formal and distant in the classroom, but out of the classroom, they are expected to be more informal. There is a feeling that teachers and students should think of each other as members of an extended family.

Many of the so-called characteristics of the Chinese learners are stereotyping, and especially for those people who are of Chinese ethnic origin, under the CHC, such as that of the HK people, whose ancestor were either refugees or immigrants, who had an adaptive and practical orientation to settle in the new places. These Chinees learners under the CHC would not find it difficult to adapt to new forms of pedagogical approaches and practices. This is especially the case of the HK Chinese learners, who have been live in the cross-road of the East and West, and exposed to the British education system and international influence over

the years. Therefore, the issue of cultural differences in teaching and learning can be adapted and adopted.

Chinese Students' Teaching and Learning Styles

Chinese Teaching Styles

According to Pajares (1992, 314), 'all teachers hold beliefs, however, defined and labeled about their work'. The teacher's belief is a powerful factor that influences their teaching and decision in a teaching situation. In general, there are two dominant approaches to teaching: didactic and facilitative:

Didactic Style

The didactic approach to teaching primary involves lecturing and is essentially teacher-centred. (Entwistle, 1997). The didactic teaching style can be loosely equated to the knowledge conveying categories proposed by Ramsden's (1992) 'teaching as telling or transmission theory'. In the transmission approach, the teacher views teaching as a process of expert transmitting knowledge to students. The didactic teaching style has its advantage of being cost-effective in giving a lecture to a mass group of students. However, there are some disadvantages including rote learning, learning by note taking and potential boredom as the approach limits student participation and reflection. The traditional Chinese teaching style was teacher-centred. It places social harmony as one of the key priorities and emphasise social hierarchy and stability. In addition, there was a formal and respectful student-teacher relationship, the students view the teacher as authority and source of knowledge, there were no questions in the classroom.

Facilitative Style

The facilitative approach means that teaching is 'no longer seen as imparting knowledge and doing things to the student, but as redefined as facilitation of self-directed learning". (Tight, 1996, p. 26). The facilitative teaching style can be loosely equated to the knowledge categories proposed by Ramsden's (1992) 'facilitating of learning'. In the facilitative (humanistic) approach, the teacher views teaching as a process of building a relationship with students and facilitating student learning (Rogers 1969). In this model, it is believed that

every individual has the potential to learn and it is the teacher's responsibility to facilitate learning. The facilitative style has its advantages of being interactive on sharing ideas and experiences between the teacher and students and among the students, which helps students to make sense of experience in relation to real-world events and motivates the students to adopt self-directed learning. According to the characteristics of Chinees learner, one will likely to think that the Chinese teachers tend not to adopt the facilitative teaching style in order to comply with the Confucian traditions.

Chinese Student's Learning Style

Sit (2013) reviews the Chinese students' learning styles and characteristics observed in Western countries, and finds that there are three dominant learning styles due to their Confucian tradition:

(a) Rote Learning

Historically, China's traditional education is examination-oriented. Learning on examination is dependent on memorization. It has been argued that examinations promote surface learning as students just repeat information without a real understanding of the meaning or how the new information relates to previous knowledge (Kennedy, 2002).

(b) Silent Learning

The Confucian traditions encourage the Chinese to respect hierarchical relationships. Teachers are greatly respected as good role models; to keep order and harmony, students are usually permitted to speak up until being called upon. Listening attentively throughout the class is kept as a virtue and Chinese students rarely question or challenge the knowledge transmitted by the teacher.

(c) Passive Learning

This is because the Chinese teacher-student relationship is a formal one in the classroom and teaching is conducted one-way whereas the teachers transmit the knowledge to the student, and the students receive the knowledge.

However, I do not think that the facilitative teaching style is contrary to the Confucian culture for several reasons. First, the facilitative (humanistic) approach does emphasise on the building of relationship between the teacher and the students, which could be achievable because the Chinese teacher and the students tend to have a formal and respectful student-teacher relationship in the classroom and a good and harmonious student-teacher relationship

outside the classroom, which is conducive to facilitative teaching style. Second, Confucius' ideal of educability for all is equated to the humanistic concept that every individual has the potential to learn and it is the teacher's responsibility to facilitate learning.

The Preferred Form of Chinese Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Strategies, and Assessment

Nield (2004) conducted research on a group of Chinese learners studying a distance learning course in Sport and Leisure Management to find out the possible cultural differences in preferred forms of teaching, learning, and assessment, which are being examined in relation to the delivery of the WBL programme:

Curriculum

Chinese learners usually prefer studies of 'hard' subjects than 'soft' subjects. The 'hard' subjects emphasise rigorous scientific thinking and the 'soft 'subjects are intuitive and subjective. However, there is no evidence in the research to support this view. The WBL programme has no fixed curriculum but uses a trans-disciplinary approach in studying professional practices.

Teaching and Learning Strategies

The general views are that Chinese students prefer passive learning. However, the studied students indicate a preference for group projects and role-play. The WBL porgramme also encourages collaborations and supports group work.

The role of the teacher

The Chinese teacher is regarded as all-knowing and is the sole provider of knowledge. In the studies, the students expect the teacher to have 'professional knowledge' and 'always provide useful and effective notes and materials'. However, the WBL progarmme changes the knowledge transfer role of the teacher and requires the teacher to be a facilitator.

Assessment

The conventional view is that Chinese students prefer examinations and questions that require a definite answer. However, this study shows that students dislike examinations and prefer

group projects. The WBL programme has no written examination but students need to prepare coursework, and the undertaking of a WBL project is key component of the assessment, and collaborated WBL project is welcomed.

Pedagogy and Culture

This section examines pedagogy and culture, which includes ccultural dimensions on teaching and learning, ccultural resistance to import pedagogy, and adaptability of learning styles in the CHC.

According to Hofstede (1986) and Hofstede and Hofstede (2005), all social interactions including those in HE settings, are culturally mediated. They identified 5 cultural dimensions (1) power distance (PDI), (2) individualism (IDV), (3) masculinity (MAS), (4) uncertainty avoidance (UAI), and (5) short-term orientation (STO) and long-term orientation (LTO), which affect teaching and learning in the following aspects:

(1) PDI	-	student-teacher relations
(2) IDV	-	student participation and purpose of education
(3) MAS	-	student behavior and teaching evaluation
(4) UAI	-	teaching and learning expectations and behaviour
(5) STO & LTO	-	sources of academic failure or success

Hofstede states that there are cultural dimensions that affect teaching and learning, and in HK, which is a Confucian Heritage Culture region, these may relate to:

- Student-teacher relationship

  The relationship is teacher-centred, where teachers are regarded as an expert and source of knowledge that will result in student dependency on the teacher and didactic teaching style.
- Purpose of education and student participation

  Academic certification is perceived as having a high social value and therefore aid in climbing the social ladder. There is a preference for the learners to group learning.
- Student behavior and teaching evaluation

The classroom behaviors are characterised by mutual solidarity and low open competition, which encourages peer learning and support; and the worth of the teacher will be determined by her social skills.

- Teaching and learning expectation and behaviour
  Students prefer structured learning and value principles more than practices
- Source of academic success and failure
  Students will tend to attribute effort as the source of academic success or failure. Hofstede's work in different countries has since been developed into the generalised typology of West vs. East cultural differences in concepts of teaching and learning. However, these have been critiqued by Signorini, Wiesemes, and Murphy (2009), who argue that there are several problems in applying Hofstede's model of culture, which equates 'culture' to 'nation' that is highly problematic; it does not consider the flexible and changing nature of culture and it is not able to reflect cultural changes in the new global context of HE; and it collected data during the 1960s - 1970s, and in the IBM corporate setting, which does not match the current international HE context.

Hu (2002) examines the case of the Chinese Government's introduction of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) to enhance the teaching of the English language teachers and learning of the students in mainland China and finds that such importation of foreign pedagogy was not successful and argues that the CLT and the Chines culture of learning are in conflict in several aspects (p.102), which include the following:

- Philosophical assumptions about the nature of teaching and learning (e.g. the interactive model of CLT vs. the Chinese epistemic model)
- Perception of the respective roles and responsibilities of teachers and students (e.g. learner-centredness vs. teacher dominance/control)
- Learning strategies encouraged and used (e.g. verbal activeness vs. mental activeness)
- Qualities valued in students (e.g. independence and individuality in CLT vs. receptiveness and conformity in the Chinese culture of learning)

Hu (2002) therefore claims that the CLT tenets and practices are incompatible with those found in the Chinese culture of learning due to potential cultural resistance to pedagogical import.

Sit (2013) states that the Chinese learning approach is characterised by a dependency on memorisation and reproduction compared to the western students who appear to show greater critical reasoning and processing. This perception tends to be based on Biggs' (1996) conception of surface and deep learning processes in which the Chinese learning approach would be classed as a surface learning approach. However, as Kennedy (2002) indicates the HK adult Chinese learners could adapt to different learning styles which are more active than rote learning and the more passive learning styles that they had been accustomed to at high school. Wong (2004) also finds the CHC students can adapt their learning style from a teacher-centred one to student-centred. These indicate that the careful construction of a safe, student-centred learning environment, which shows value for all students and encourages active participation, can lead to constructive changes in the learning styles of the Asian students moving to a Western education context. I found this to be the case with our WBL students.

WBL Teaching & Learning and Pedagogical Practices

The WBL programme is different from traditional education programmes, and due to its characteristics, the teaching and learning of WBL may require other approaches. In this section, I review the pedagogical approaches to WBL, WBL pedagogy and pedagogical practice, constructivist approaches to WBL, and teaching and learning strategies towards constructivist learning.

Pedagogical Approaches to WBL

After conducting several WBL case studies at the UK HEIs, Nixon et al (2008) sum up the Pedagogical Approaches to WBL with the following features:

- It emphasises a pedagogical process - rather than a content-driven curriculum
- The process is strongly learner-centred and stresses a self-directed approach to learning
- The pedagogy is experiential, which calls for the use of reflection to recognise and create learning
- The reflective practice is supported through evidence-based assessment

- The adopted pedagogical approaches take on a more flexible approach to deliver

Boud (et al. 2001) summarises the characteristics of the WBL curriculum. There are unique features of a WBL curriculum and learning process, which result in some educational/cultural differences of the WBL learners. The author offers six key elements, which set it apart from the conventional type of learning. However, the article is rather descriptive and does not examine the detailed concepts that underpin the WBS curriculum.

Lester and Costley (2009) observe that WBL programmes generally require a different set of practices for learning facilitation than those which are appropriate to taught programmes. The role of the tutor often moves from being a teacher to being both a facilitator and an expert resource person, and, being a supervisor to an advisor or academic consultant. According to Lester and Costley (2009), the role of the WBL tutors can be varied and include the following:

- Encouraging learners to be active in identifying their needs and aspirations and managing their learning processes
- Acting as a process consultant to the learners
- Facilitating learners to develop their abilities of critical reflection and inquiry
- Helping learners identify and work with ethical issues
- Helping learners make effective use of workplace resources
- Developing learners' academic skills and helping them using them in the workplace
- Providing specialist expertise

Lester and Costley (2009) note the changing roles of the tutors in facilitating WBL.

WBL is a form of deep learning that requires a deep learning approach. Gibbs' (1992) put forward strategies to promote a deep approach to learning and improve the quality of learning, which includes some features of WBL teaching and learning practices. These include encouraging independent learning and assessing of learning outcomes, supporting personal development, involving the encouragement of learner motivation, synthesising relevant knowledge from different subject sources, using learning diaries and reflective journals, learning by doing, emphasising the learners' active involvement, motivating learning tasks and activities, setting projects involving the application of knowledge to new situations, working in groups involving interactive project-based work and adopting peer

tutoring. It can be seen that WBL uses some of the deep learning approach teaching and learning strategies put forward by Gibb (1992) and should be adopted and in the delivery of the WBL programme.

WBL Pedagogy and Pedagogical Practices

Chisholm, et al, (2009) review several key theories of experiential learning to derive a common experiential framework for WBL and discuss the work of Raelin and Schon and present the characterisation of WBL by consideration of the theories of experiential learning. Raelin (2008) claims that WBL is more than experiential learning and regards WBL as the addition of simulated experience to conventional conceptual knowledge. Schon (1987) provides strong support for the experiential approach when he recorded the case for practitioners creating knowledge due to reflective learning derived from inquiries made on resolving problems arising in their practices. There are four general themes that support experiential learning, including adult learning and experiential learning, epistemology of knowledge, organisational knowledge, and social learning. An understanding of them would enable the practitioner to gain insights into the WBL pedagogy.

Adult Learning and Experiential Learning

Knowles (1975) puts forward the notion of andragogy and suggests that there are differences between learning for adults and children. He notes four learning principles for adult learning, which include: self-directedness, their experience can be used as resources for learning, learning with aims to improve their work skills, and performance-centred. Dewey (1963) regards experience as an essential component of the educational process. The model of experiential learning involves perceiving a problem followed by its articulation, the formation of a hypothesis and finally giving reflective consideration to its consequences. Dewey argues that learners work on a new experience to understand it, based on knowledge and understanding derived from earlier experience. Itin (1999), proposes the Diamond Model where the experiential learning process involves the educator and the learner in a trans-active process, which underpins much of what happens in the WBL processes and environments and can be considered useful to explain WBL. It considers the transactive concepts between the

educator, learner, learning environment, and subject matter. The model supports the underlying theoretical approach to interpreting WBL as an educational process.

Experiential Learning Cycle

David Kolb (1984) links his conceptual framework to the theories of Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget, putting experiential learning into his famous experiential learning cycle. Kolb suggests that learning is a process that creates knowledge because of the transformation of experience. The learner goes through the four different stages of experiential learning in the cycle: (1) concrete experience, (2) reflective observation, (3) theory conceptualisation, and (4) experiential testing, to construct knowledge. However, as Lucas (2010) commented, the model has its weakness in under-valuing the role of the teacher and neglects the pedagogic processes involved, and in some instances, people may learn more effectively when they develop a theoretical understanding first and then test it out later in practice.

Epistemology of Knowledge

Epistemology of knowledge sets out the apparatus we will use to explore knowledge. This apparatus is influenced by our ontology. There are several ways of finding out how we know something about something and finding out more. In the practice knowledge area, as Schon (1983) and Argyris and Schon (2006) suggest, there is knowledge in the workplace, and practitioners are able to create knowledge by studying their practices and engaging in solving workplace issues. Schon (1983) develops his concept of the reflective practitioner and stresses that reflection on practice informs the creation of knowledge.

Organisational Knowledge

Argyris and Schon (1978) examine the different types of learning for individuals and groups in an organisational setting. They introduce the concepts of organisational learning and differentiate between ‘single-loop ‘and ‘double-loop learning. According to Raelin (2008), WBL is essentially a double-loop/triple-loop experiential learning process which is about individuals achieving transformational changes to their thinking and understanding, thus providing continuous professional development independent of any specific academic discipline.

Social Learning

According to Lave and Wenger (1991), learning is situated. They claim that learning is

influenced by the learner's membership of a social group or community and the relationship and learning behaviours among members are crucial in the learning, especially in a practice-based setting. Wenger (et al. 2002) later suggests that these practitioners share a pool of resources, experience, tools, and similar practices on solving problems. However, Fuller (2005) and her colleagues) highlighted several limitations of the community of practice model, including it had little to say about how an expert continues to learn, it neglects the role played by formal teaching, it does not explain how newcomers identify themselves and develop their associated knowledge and skills, and there may exist an unequal power relationship in the community of practice among its members that may hinder learning development.

In this Section, I have examined some features of the pedagogical approaches to WBL, which is process-oriented, learner-centred, tutor-facilitated, and uses reflection to construct meanings and new learning. Experientialism is the backbone of WBL and there are four major types of experiential learning that are directly related to WBL. These include adult learning and experiential learning, epistemology of knowledge, organisation knowledge, and social learning, which generates WBL. In the next section, I examine the constructivist approach to WBL and see how the cognitive approaches help the learners to adapt to constructing new knowledge and support the learners in developing expanded knowledge in a socio-cultural setting.

Constructivist Approaches to Work Based Learning

In this section, I review the constructivist approach to learning, teaching and learning strategies towards constructive learning, and role for the adult educator. In addition, I review some constructivist instructional techniques and teaching and learning strategies for constructivist learning, which may be suitable for the facilitating of WBL.

Piaget's Cognitive Approach to Learning

Piaget (1985) proposed using the following two processes of constructing knowledge: 'assimilation' and 'accommodation', and both lend themselves to constructivist teaching and learning strategies. He explained how new information is assimilated to fit within the

learner's existing knowledge, and existing knowledge is itself modified to accommodate the new information. There are three major concepts in the cognitive process, which include:

- Assimilation: it occurs when a learner perceives new objectives or events in terms of existing schemas or operations and this information is compared with existing cognitive structures
- Accommodation: it occurs when existing schemes or operations must be modified to account for a new experience
- Equilibration: it encompasses both assimilation and accommodation, and irregular experience creates a state of disequilibrium which needs to be resolved by adaptation and adoption of a new mode of thought

Piaget's cognitive approach to construct new knowledge may be suitable to effect a change of mindset to create adaptability in the WBL students and tutors. They should understand the characteristics and recognise the differences of the WBL programme - that WBL is informal learning and a mode 2 knowledge production that is beneficial to the professional practitioners' CPD.

Vygotsky's Cognitive Cultural Approach to Learning

Vygotsky (1978) stresses the role of the individual's interaction with their socio-cultural setting in the process of constructing knowledge. He developed the concept of 'zone of proximal development'(ZPD), which enables the learner to develop their knowledge in a gradual step-by-step process, extending their learning under a guide. This model has two developmental levels:

- The level of actual development - the point the learner has already reached, and can solve the problem independently
- The level of potential development (zone of proximal development) – the point the learner can reach under the guidance of teachers or in collaboration with peers

To ensure development in the ZPD, the assistance received must have certain features:

(1) Shared understanding - the process whereby two participants who begin a task with different understandings arrive at a shared understanding.

(2) Scaffolding - adjusting the support offered during a teaching session to fit the less experienced learner's current level of performance.

(3) Guided participation - this refers to shared endeavours between the expert and the less expert participant.

Vygotsky's conception on the ZPD helps to explain how the novice can learn from the expert by the latter's provisions of on-going support and relative adjustments to help and guide the former to extend their development of knowledge in the socio-cultural setting. The constructivist approach to learning has been critiqued by Kirschner, Sweller, and Richard (2006) for its weakness of giving minimum guidance in the learning processes. Depriving novice learners of explicit guidance early on in a process can reduce the effectiveness of the learning, and without appropriate mental models, schema or rules, novices may find it difficult to integrate what they have learned with their prior knowledge and experience. However, these shortcomings can be remedied by introducing a separate and expanded WBL induction in the commencement of the WBL programme, with clear elaboration on the WBL framework and teaching and learning strategies, and various kinds of support mechanisms, and overall learning outcomes.

Cognitive Apprenticeship Instructional Techniques

Collins, Brown, & Newman (1989) developed six instructional techniques rooted in cognitive apprenticeship, and claim that these methods help students attain cognitive and metacognitive strategies for 'using, managing, and discovering knowledge'. The first three teaching methods, modeling, coaching, and scaffolding are at the core of cognitive apprenticeship and help with cognitive and metacognitive development. The next two teaching methods, articulation and reflection, are designed to help novices with awareness of problem-solving strategies and execution like that of an expert. The final teaching method, exploration, intends to guide the novice towards independence and the ability to solve and identify problems within the domain on their own. These cognitive apprenticeship instructional techniques are discussed in relation to the existing WBL teaching and learning strategies below.

- Modeling - experts demonstrate a task explicitly so that students can experience and build a conceptual model of the task at hand. WBL relates to procedural knowledge and it is necessary for the tutor to show to the students the tactic knowledge and skills in an explicit manner.
- Coaching – it involves the tutor observing a student's task performance and offering feedback and hints to shape the student's performance to an expert level. The tutor

needs to oversees the student's task and provide feedback and stretching the student's performance and development.

- Scaffolding - instructional scaffolding is the act of applying strategies and methods to support the student's learning. The WBL tutor may need to provide various kinds of assistance and adjust them to fit an individual student's abilities and progress to optimise their growth and development.
- Articulation - there are three types of articulation, which are inquiry teaching, thinking aloud, and critical role. The WBL tutor needs to question the students, clarify their thoughts, and facilitate their critique of the practice.
- Reflection - reflection allows students to compare their own problem-solving processes with those of an expert and another student. The WBL tutor facilitates the students to reflect and analyse their performance with a purpose for continuous improvement.
- Exploration – it involves giving students room to solve the problem on their own and teach them exploration strategies. The WBL tutor is required to slowly withdraw the use of support and scaffolding and encourage the student to adopt a self-directed learning approach and become an autonomous learner.

Teaching and Learning Strategies towards Constructivist Learning

Re-contextualisation

In a research project, Evan, Guile, and Harris (2009) developed strategies that involve WBL elements, as they recognise that there are issues of contexts between the conventional HE and WBL that needed to be addressed to facilitate effective teaching and learning. This requires 're-contextualisation'. In the delivery of the WBL programme, there are four contexts and modes in this process.

- Programme design environment (content re-contextualisation) – it is important to make clear to the student that WBL has no fixed curriculum, and uses the workplace as a curriculum, so it is up to the student to negotiate a learning syllabus for his or own professional development. This is negotiated and agreed by the student, the university, and the employer (sponsor of the WBL project).
- Teaching and facilitating environment (pedagogic re-contextualisation) – the WBL

teaching and learning process is learner-centred, which emphasises the facilitative teaching style and a participative learning style of the students.

- Workplace (workplace re-contextualisation) – the WBL tutor needs to have extensive professional experience and be able to bring authentic task/practice and local cases to the classroom for discussion and learning.
- Learners making sense of the whole (learners re-contextualisation) – it is necessary for the tutor to use Piaget's cognitive approach to 'assimilating', 'accommodating' and 'equilibrating' the conception that WBL is informal learning and mode 2 knowledge production, which is beneficial to the professional practitioners' CPD, and adapting to its different pedagogy and teaching and learning practices.

Roles for an Adult Educator

According to Caffarella and Barnett (1994), there are four roles for an adult educator in the constructivist approaches to creating knowledge:

- Facilitator – a key role of the WBL tutor is to create an environment of trust, authenticity, and integrity, with the learners, enhancing their ability to speak with an open mind.
- Instigator – the main responsibility of the WBL tutor is to introduce 'experiential' learning into a formal learning situation in a variety of ways including, experiential classroom exercise, adventure-based activities, and problem-based or project-based activities
- Coach – the WBL tutor asks questions, provides encouragement, examines strategies, and facilitates the learners to see things from different perspectives
- Assessor – as an adult educator, the WBL tutor plays the role of an assessor in the learner's APEL portfolio. The assessor needs to encourage the learner to express their views and learning, use appropriate language and terms, and facilitate reflection on the process of articulating their prior learning

In this section, I have examined the constructivist approach to learning, teaching and learning strategies towards constructive learning, the cognitive apprenticeship instructional techniques to facilitate WBL, and the role of an adult educator. In essence, it is about the learner, and how any approach can enhance the positive experience of the learner. The following section has a look at this dimension.

Supporting Learners' Learning

Gosling (2003) suggests that the purpose of providing learning support services and resources to the learners is to meet their 'learning needs'. In the below paragraphs, I examine the support of learning development services and learning resources in relation to the delivery of the WBL programme.

- Pre-entry guidance and support – it is important to provide a thorough understanding of the WBL concepts and processes to the prospective student before joining the WBL programme
- Learner induction – there is a need for a separate and expended induction session for the WBL students at the beginning of the WBL programme
- Study skills and academic integrity – it is necessary to provide a literature search & referencing session to the WBL students, as many of them left school some time ago and, some of them have not been in HE before
- Diagnostic screening – it is important to select the right candidates to be WBL students as it requires self-discipline for self-directed learning
- Personal development planning – it is important to provide an academic pastor and adviser in the learning support service. There are several resource persons at the HKWBLC to support the WBL students' learning including the programme leader, module tutors, programme advisers, and project supervisors
- Providing formative feedback to learners – the HKWBLC team provides formative feedback to the students' draft coursework before submission
- Peer support – the HKWBLC encourages the WBL students to form study groups and provides meeting venues for the students to come together for discussions and sharing of ideas among themselves to promote peer learning
- Library resources and e-resources – the WBL students need to have access to the University's e-learning platform (i.e. UniHub) and related training on using e-resource, and WBL books and materials at the Centre
- Information technology – the Centre needs to provides IT facilities for the WBL students to use

- Academic literacy, and English language – nearly all local WBL students are users of English as a second language, and the Centre needs to provide academic writing sessions and English language support to the WBL students to enhance their academic writing.

WBL is a new concept for many of the learners and it is important to prepare an effective introduction to WBL teaching and learning processes. According to Gosling (2003), there are some characteristics of an ideal induction programme, which are listed below in relation to the delivery of the WBL programme in HK.

- Be strategically located and managed – the WBL induction session will be a separated and expended one to be conducted at the commencement of the programme
- Address academic, social and cultural adjustments that students may face – the induction will enable the WBL students to understand the characteristics and recognise the differences of WBL and ensure the WBL students are able to adapt to the WBL pedagogy and teaching and learning practices
- Make academic expectations explicit – it is important to let the WBL students know that WBL is as rigorous as any other traditional education programme, and it demands self-discipline in the self-directed WBL process
- Include teaching staff at a personal level – if possible, all programme team members will be presented at the induction session to show the Centre's commitment and efforts to students' learning support
- Recognise existing skills and experience – the WBL programme recognises individual student's existing skills and experience, and the WBL tutors are required to provide various levels of support to different students
- Recognise different entry points and routes into higher education – the WBL programme uses the APEL claim allowing students to pursue higher educaion at various entry points
- Be student-centred rather than organisation centred – the WBL induction needs to be student-centred as they are the end-users of the learning support service
- Be evaluated with outcomes and actions communicated to relevant stakeholders – WBL should be evaluated separately and its results reported to the relevant parties

In this section, I have looked at the support for WBL formative feedback which will help the learners to construct and re-construct meanings after receiving formative feedback from the tutors. Induction is important as most of the learners will find WBL new to them and the approach, pedagogical practices, and expectations need to be fully understood by the WBL learners.

There is limited research on the perspectives of the tutors and learners in relation to the teaching and learning of the WBL programme, particularly outside Europe. This research aims to narrow this research gap and conduct empirical research investigating the perspectives of WBL tutors and learners. It will examine their respective perceptions of the differences in the WBL programme and views on the teaching and learning of WBL programmes at the HKWBLC. It will analyse the WBL programmes' suitability to HK professional practitioners and identify approaches and practices to enhance pedagogical competencies of the WBL tutors and pedagogical support of the WBL learners in delivering the WBL programmes in a CHC region.

The knowledge landscape focuses on four areas. First, an exploration of WBL in relation to its characteristics. Second, an examination of the changing trends in HE in relation to WBL's features that highlights self-directed learning and the; differences between formal and informal learning. Third, it studies the cultural differences in teaching and learning' regarding Eastern vs. Western learning approach to see if WBL is a suitable learning approach to HK professional practitioners. Fourth, an inspection of the WBL teaching and learning and pedagogical practices' to identify possible enhancement measures for WBL teaching and learning approaches and pedagogical practices, making it more appropriate to HK professional practitioners.

3 Choosing and Developing Research Design

This chapter discusses the influences on my choice of research design. These include my own research paradigm and positioning; the context where the research will take place; the knowledge landscape which I have presented; my access to knowledge, documents, and participants; roles of being a practitioner-researcher and ethical and confidentiality issues. Rationales are put forwarded for using a mixed methods approach in a context-specific case study (WBL programme in HK). To collect data, I employed, questionnaires, interviews, and carried out an exploration of documents and the analysis was primarily thematic but relevant to the particular method. Insider-researcher issues in the research process are explored together with the related ethical and confidential issues. The different criteria for research quality for quantitative and quality research are examined and with particular attention paid to reflexivity in qualitative research. Finally, several limitations of the research project are examined.

Research Paradigms and My Positioning

As a practitioner-researcher of this WBL project, my paradigm and frame of reference influence my approach to the literature choices and review, the formulation of the project's purpose, aims and objectives, the choice of research approach, methodology and methods, the analyses and interpretations, and discussions of the results. In undertaking a doctoral-level piece of practitioner research, as a researcher, it is important that I am aware of and transparent about my ontology - my perspective on truth and reality, before embarking on the research. Understanding my own ontology and positioning also allows me to be able to question my own assumptions before I can critically engage in and question the perspectives that others take on an issue. As a researcher, I need to adopt paradigms within which to carry out research.

Research Paradigms

Bassey (1999) defines a research paradigm as ‘a network of coherent ideas about the nature of the world and of the functions of the researcher which, adhered to by a group of researchers, conditions the patterns of their thinking and underpins their research actions’ (p. 35). Research paradigms refer to our understanding of what we know about something and how we gather knowledge about it. According to Guba (1990), paradigms can be characterised through ontology (what is reality?), epistemology (how do you know something?), and methodology (how do we go about finding out?). These characteristics create a holistic view of how I as a person, and as a practitioner-researcher, view knowledge; how I see myself in relation to knowledge and the methodological strategies that I use to discover it. Lather (2006) suggests that there are three dominant paradigms for researchers to consider adopting in their investigations: positivism which predicts; interpretivism (constructivism) which understands and critical theory which emancipates. Grix (2010) suggests that unlike ‘positivism’ that deals with ‘objectivity’ and use of ‘scientific method’, interpretivism concerns itself with ‘subjectivity’ and ‘understanding’. I decided to adopt an ‘interpretive’ stance in the research process because it is my ontological position as a practitioner-researcher to seek informed practice in my investigation.

Ontological Being and Epistemological Position

As a researcher, I need to examine my personal values and perspectives as a lens through which I discover and learn with questions such as what is my notion of ‘fact’ (reality) and how do I discover it in the world where I live. My previous undergraduate exposures to the teaching of Descartes and Max Webber moulded me to be an ontological ‘subjective’ being in this world. However, I believe that one cannot detach oneself from social interactions with others that form the realities in the social construction process, which in turn, has led me to an epistemological position of ‘constructivism’ on knowledge. My personal philosophical position is related to my conceptual notion of reality, and how it connects to the contextual perspectives of knowledge gathering, in my professional and organisational situations. This is an important influence on my choice of approach. The subjective position, how people experience themselves in the world, their concept of reality and how learning emerges from

human beings' interactions with the objects around them are central to my research. As I matured, I started seeing the world, not in the pure 'black' and 'white' state and realised there may be a 'relative' truth derived from a consensus of members of the societies and communities. Therefore, I can take on both the 'positivist' and 'interpretivist' approach in conducting research. The 'positivist' approach tends to be logical and based on hard facts and methods (e.g. questionnaires); which ensure there are sufficient responses on the issues surveyed to give a broader picture of the reality. The interpretivist approach tends to use naturalistic methods (e.g. interviews), which ensure there are adequate dialogues between the researcher and respondents to collaboratively construct a meaningful reality, obtaining their perspectives. These factors influenced my choice of a constructivist paradigm to guide me in making decisions and carrying out my research. After pursuing my undergraduate and postgraduate education in social science and working in the business and education fields for over 35 years, I have a constructivist paradigm that equips me with an exploring and interpretive approach to the research study. My interpretivist research approach provides me with a realist ontology and a transactional epistemology, and the constructivist paradigm has the research implications that my values are inherent in all phases of the research process, and the truth is negotiated through dialogue. This practitioner research investigated my own practice of managing, teaching and learning practices in WBL in the HKWBLC context.

Mode 2 Knowledge Production

The notion of mode 2 knowledge production is coined in 'The New Production of Knowledge' (Gibbons *et al.,* 1994) which studies the emergence of a knowledge production system that is 'socially distributed'. While knowledge production used to be located primarily at academic, government and research institutions and structured by scientific disciplines, its new locations, practices, and principles are much more heterogeneous. According to MacLean, MacIntosh and Grant (2002) there are five main features of mode 2 knowledge production: it is generated in the context of application that emphasises problem-solving; it is transdisciplinary involving the integration of different knowledge and skills; it is produced in a diverse variety of organisations resulting in heterogeneous practices; it involves reflexibility in its dialogic process that is capable of incorporating multiple views; and the researcher

needs to be aware of the societal consequences of their works and sensitive to the impact of the research and the quality of mode 2 knowledge production is reflected by the concerns of the broader community of interest.

Key Aspects and Characteristics of Practitioner Research

According to Costley, Elliott & Gibbs (2012), an important aspect of practitioner research is the researcher's situatedness and context. Similarly, Lave & Wenger (1991) state that learning occurs as a function of the activity, context, and culture in which it is situated and unlike classroom learning activities that involve knowledge which is abstract and out of context. This situated learning has its origins in Vygotsky's sociocultural approach to cognitive development (1978) and social interaction is a critical component of situated learning. Situatedness arises from the interplay between the researcher (myself), situation (circumstances and positionality) and context (the backgrounds). It is important to note that the personal, professional and organisational contexts affect my practitioner research that leads to the production of mode 2 knowledge.

Reed and Procter (1995, p.195) identify some characteristics for practitioner research in the social studies of health, which I shall draw on as it is relevant to my research. Practitioner research is a social process undertaken with colleagues, and my research is an insider-led work-based project that involves the students, tutors, and organisations through my personal, professional and social contacts. It is educative for all participants and my research will inform the participants on the major stakeholders' perspectives on the teaching and learning of WBL practices in HK and related enhancements. The research is immersed with a development dimension that focuses on the enhancements of teaching and learning practices of WBL in HK and the capability of the WBL tutors. It is focused on practices and initiating changes, and as the lead person in the WBL delivery operations at the HKWBLC, I have the ability to control and initiate changes in teaching and learning practices. The research identifies and explores socio-political and historical factors affecting the practice, which provides an account of the history and development of the HK WBL operations, including its partners and types of students and programmes. It opens up value issues for critical enquiry and discussion of the HKWBLC, students, and tutors; critiquing and discussing their

concerns on development, learning strategies, and teaching strategies respectively. It is designed to give a say to all participants with the use of survey methods by means of questionnaires, interviews, and minutes of the Board of Studies providing opportunities for them to express their views. The practitioner research enhances professional development and the capacity of participants in the work context, which include the suggested enhancements on the proposed new WBL programme and induction session for students and tutors that will eventually improve the teaching and learning practices of the students and tutors at the HKWBLC. The research integrates my personal and professional learning to elevate myself to be an expert in the WBL delivery in this part of the world, and it also produces valuable insights that can be conveyed and are worthy of interest to a wider audience, who would like to deliver WBL programmes outside the UK in a CHC region that is similar to HK.

After serving as the lead person at HKWBLC for 16 years, I could use my store of knowledge and experiential learning to critique current practices and to add value to the project findings. It was important to keep the audience in mind and I decided I would need hard data or a demonstration of rigorous methods if I were to use the research to persuade MU, the IWBL, the HK Centre, and the Programme Team to adopt my research findings and recommendations. The research's aim is to enhance the pedagogical practices of WBL in HK as well as convincing organisations to support their employees/members to incorporate the WBL programme as part of their employee development/CPD, thus benefitting the whole organisation and the individuals. I needed to use my insider knowledge with sufficient sensitivity to approach the participants without prejudice to understand their perspectives on WBL teaching and learning when gathering perspectives from the WBL learners and tutors on the WBL teaching and learning programme in the HK contexts; examining the teaching and learning issues/pedagogical practices of WBL and exploring how to deliver the WBL programmes effectively to respond to the needs of the HK professional practitioners and employers/professional associations.

It is important to pay attention to research ethics when conducting practitioner research, and this will be explored in a later section. This section looks at the influences on choosing my research methodologies. These include discussions on being able to take on both the 'positivist' and 'interpretivist' approach to a mixed methods research; insider-researcher access to materials and participants and the impact of culture and rapid changing contexts that the literature has raised, hence, I need to adopt the methodological strategies that were

context-bounded (i.e. case study), which would contribute to growing literature where there may be commonalities in similar cultural contexts. Therefore, I wanted an approach that would bring different data from various sources that include students, tutors, organisations, and programme materials, as well as benchmarking from a survey which would contribute to reliability and validity. The next section examines the use of a mixed methods research approach.

Mixed Methods Research Approach

Mixed methods can be defined as 'research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study' (Tashakkori and Creswell 2007, p.4). Mixed methods involve the intentional collection of both quantitative and qualitative data and the combination of the strengths of each to answer research questions but also for the findings of one method to inform the other.

Nature and Combinations of Quantitative and Qualitative Research

Crewell (2005) states that quantitative research is a type of educational research in which the researcher decides what to study, asks specific narrow questions, collects numeric data from the participants, analyses these numbers using statistics, and conducts the inquiry in an unbiased manner. Qualitative research is a type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the views of the participants, asks broad general questions, collects data largely consisting of words from the participants, describes and analyses these words for themes, and conducts the inquiry in a subjective biased manner.

To expand, quantitative research is a mode of inquiry used often for deductive research when the goal is to test theories or hypotheses, gather descriptive information, or examine relationships among variables. These variables are measured and yield numeric data that can be analysed statically. Quantitative data is able to produce measurable evidence, help to establish cause and effect, yield efficient data collection procedures, create the possibility of

replication and generalisation to a population, facilitate the comparison of groups, and provide insight into a breadth of experience.

Whereas qualitative research focuses on the context and meaning of human lives and experiences for inductive research or theory development driven research. Qualitative methods facilitate the collection of data when measures do not exist and provide a depth of understanding of concepts. It is a systematic and rigorous form of inquiry that uses data collection methods such as interviews and reviews of documents. Qualitative data help the researcher understands processes, especially those that emerge over time, provide detailed information about setting or context, and emphasise the voices of participants through quotes.

Quantitative and qualitative research are not mutually exclusive, as Blaxter (2010) points out that qualitative data often includes quantification (e.g. statement such as more than, less than, most, as well as specific numbers), and quantitative approaches can collect qualitative (non-numeric) data through open-ended questions. My project then used both quantitative and qualitative approaches, and they complemented each other. For instance, the quantitative method (e.g. questionnaire) showed 'breadth' on the perspectives of a wide range of WBL students on their learning experience; and qualitative methods (e.g. interview) showed 'depth' of views of some WBL students on their learning experience.

Rationales for Using a Mixed Methods Research Approach

According to Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner (2007), mixed methods research can be defined as a research approach or method which has the following characteristics. First, mixed methods focus on research questions that call for real-life contextual understandings, multi-level perspectives, and cultural influences. This is applicable to my research as I need to investigate the WBL teaching and learning practices at the HKWBLC, the cultural factors that influence these practices, and how do the various major stakeholders perceive and experience the pedagogical practices, and whether they find WBL a suitable approach to the HK professional practitioners. Second, mixed methods employ quantitative research assessing the magnitude and frequency of constructs and qualitative research exploring the meaning of constructs. In my research, I first used quantitative research to assess the pattern

and trends on the experience and perceptions of the students, tutors, and organisations' perspectives on the WBL programmes in HK and then, conducted relevant in-depth interviews on the subjects to give a fuller understanding of their experience and perceptions. Third, mixed methods use multiple data collection methods. Therefore, in this research, I used different methods for data collection, which include questionnaires, interviews, and documents. Fourth, mixed methods combine these methods to draw on the strengths of each other. In my research I used questionnaires to provide concrete and measurable evidence but I also addressed the same issues through interviews and qualitative analyses on review of documents. These qualitative researches illuminated why respondents had chosen particular answers in the questionnaires and allowed for fuller understanding of the response.

Creswell & Plano Clark (2011) also suggests several reasons for using mixed methods research, which I adopted in my research. Mixed methods research enable me to view problems from multiple perspectives (of the major stakeholders) to enhance and enrich the meaning of a perspective (the WBL teaching and learning practices at the HKWBLC); contextualising information and taking a macro picture of a system (a study of the case of HKWBLC, with its local HE and cultural context in teaching and learning); merging quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (interviews and documents) data to develop a more complete understanding of a problem (issues on the WBL teaching and learning practices at the HKWBLC, and how to enhance these practices); developing a complementary (both quantitative and qualitative) picture; comparing (different theories), validate (various finding), or triangulate (different quantitative and qualitative results from various sources); providing illustrations of the (cultural, teaching and learning) context for (pedagogical) trends and practices; and examining the (teaching and learning) processes and experience of the students and tutors, along with (project) outcomes (conclusions and recommendations).

Mixed Methods Research Design

Venkatesh (et al. 2013) present several general guidelines for mixed methods research design. In Table 3.2 below, I present these guidelines and show how they apply to my mixed method research design.

Table 3.2: Major Guidelines for a Mixed Methods Design
(Source: Venkatesh (et al. 2013)

Major Guidelines	Properties of Mixed Methods Research Relating to My Research Design
1. Deciding on the appropriateness of a mixed methods approach	Research Questions I transformed the project purpose, aim and objectives into research questions. These questions seem to require both quantitative and qualitative answers from different data sources.
	1.2 Purpose of Mixed Methods Research The purpose of the mixed research design is complementarity, which presents a comprehensive breadth and in-depth analyses of the teaching and learning practices at the HKWBLC.
	1.3 Epistemological Perspective I take the interpretative (constructivism) perspective to obtain views from the respondents, socially construct the meanings and experiences of the respondents, and analyse these with my personal (constructivist) worldview.
	1.4 Paradigmatic Assumptions I adopt a dialectical stance in the research, using and respecting different paradigms as the reality is not purely black or white, but constructed socially by its many stakeholders.

2. Developing strategies for mixed methods research designs	2.1 Design Investigation Strategies I use an exploratory investigation strategy to study the pedagogical practices at the HKWBLC.
	2.2 Strands/Phases of Research The research project uses multiple phases of research. First, the quantitative method by means of the questionnaires, then, the qualitative methods by means of interviews and documents.
	2.3 Mixing Strategies I chose the partially mixed-methods design to conduct the research and mix the quantitative and qualitative data at specific stages of the study. For instance; first, use of questionnaires (both closed-end and open-ended questions – quantitative and qualitative analyses); second, use of interviews (open-ended questions – qualitative thematic analyses); and third, use of minutes of the Board of Studies (qualitative – thematic analyses).
	2.4 Time Orientation There are different time orientations in the research; firstly, I conduct the quantitative phase of questionnaires; secondly, the other qualitative phase of interviews; and thirdly, the qualitative analyses of documents.
	2.5 Priority of Methodological Approach I used the qualitative-dominant mixed-methods approach, relying heavily on a qualitative constructivist view of the research process while recognising that the addition of a quantitative approach and

	data would be beneficial to the research.
3. Develop strategies for collecting and analysing mixed methods data	3.1 Sampling Design Strategies I employed sequential sampling strategies, using methods and results from the first strand (questionnaires) to inform the method employed in the second strand (interviews), drawing different samples for the quantitative and qualitative components of the study from the respective groups of respondents.
	3.2 Data Collection Strategies I use different data collection methods (i.e. questionnaires, interviews and documents) in the research design.
	3.3 Data Analysis Strategies I use sequential quantitative-qualitative analysis in the research design; using statistical analysis on questionnaires first and thematic analysis on interviews and documents at a later stage.
4. Draw inferences from mixed methods results	4. Types of Reasoning Both deductive and inductive theoretical reasoning is used in analysing the various quantitative and qualitative sources of data.
5. Assess the quality of inference	5. Inference quality The judging of the quality of the quantitative and qualitative research will be examined on its internal/validity and reliability, and credibility/transferability and dependability respectively.

Advantages and Limitations of Mixed Methods Research

According to Venkatesh (et al., 2013), there are several advantages of mixed methods research. These include enabling researchers to simultaneously address confirmatory and explanatory research questions and evaluate and generate theory at the same time; facilitating researchers to provide stronger inferences than a single method or worldview, and providing an opportunity for the researcher to produce a greater assortment of divergent and/or complementary views.

The major criticism of the mixed methods research focuses on the incompatibility thesis, i.e. the belief that quantitative and qualitative research methods cannot be mixed in a single study as they have such different ontological and epistemological origins. I take the view that while the origins of these methods may be different, they can and should be combined effectively to produce more in-depth research. There are other criticisms on the mixed methods approach due to its practical problems. suggest that it may be difficult for one researcher to carry out a mixed methods study if the qualitative and quantitative phases are to be undertaken concurrently, which would require a team of researchers to do the research. Similarly, it would take considerable time and resources to perform sequential mixed methods research. However, I do not have to tackle the resource problems that the concurrent and sequential issues would bring because I have not designed these two kinds of mixed methods in my research.

Mixed Methods within a Case Study

This research used mixed methods research in a case study exploring enhancements to the teaching and learning practices of the WBL (MU) programmes in Hong Kong.

Case Study

Yin (1994) defines a case study in terms of the research process. “a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (Yin 1994,

p.13). The case study can be used as a research approach and a research methodology that can use any research methods. The case study allows the use of both qualitative and quantitative data to explore a situation that can then inform the whole picture of the subject of study. Therefore, it is important to provide a full context for the case studied and case study often employs qualitative data collection methods that enable a deep understanding of the case in question.

The case study offers an advantage of blending quantitative and qualitative data to explore the research questions through the various findings (questionnaires, interviews, and documents), which would capture the big picture of different people's perspectives (Robson, 2011). A case study builds on actual practices and experiences; therefore, it can be linked to actions and their insights contribute to changing practices; and since case study data are close to people's experiences, they can be more persuasive and more accessible. White (2000) suggests that the case study will always generate empirical data and information so the researcher will not be solely dependent on already published work. The data may not be present in vast amounts, but it will always be interesting and specific to the case under examination. The case study takes place in a natural setting within an actual organisation, which would give the work a 'reality'. A case study looks at the whole situation and enables the practitioner-researcher to see the interrelations. Merriam (2001) suggests that a case study offers a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon, which results in a rich and holistic account of the phenomenon that offers insights and illuminates meanings that expands its readers' experience. These insights can be constructed as a tentative hypothesis that helps structure future research; hence, the case study plays an important role in advancing a field's knowledge base. In my research, I use a case study to examine the teaching and learning and pedagogical practices of the delivery at HKWBLC to advance the practitioner-research knowledge and understanding to enhance the teaching and learning practices of WBL.

The major drawback of the case study is the question of how far the understanding of a specific case, with its rich context, can be transferred to other situations (Yin, 1994). The value of the study of single events may not be representative. It is a challenging task to analyse the data collected through the case study as the researcher needs to be aware of all the connections between various events, variables, and outcomes. White (2000) states that the case study can generate a lot of information since each different method used produces its

own findings. The analysis and interpretation need to be handled carefully and in a logical and systematic way. With a single typical case study, it is often difficult to separate out what is unique to the organisation involved and what is common to similar organisations. The degree to which one can relate to the general position is often limited. The very complexity of a case can make analysis difficult. In a case study, everything appears relevant, and researchers need to show the connections of each piece of data but not lose sight of the whole. However, the case study also has limitations that require precautions for the researcher using it. These include dealing with subjectivity and insider researcher's biases, and potential for a lack of generalisability. As discussed in later sections of this Chapter, I have included demonstrations of critical awareness of my insider researcher position, consistency in procedures and reference to extensive literature to ensure a level of consistency both across the subsets and in the overall case study which may be useful to other studies or to future studies.

Based on the above analyses, there are various reasons for using a case study as a methodology in the research project. These include using a variety of data collection methods to gather rich data; informing practice and forging close links between the academic and the practical in an empirical inquiry; advising practitioners about a single case as a way of understanding others, and it is suitable to the resources and environment of a practitioner researcher. I use the case study methodology for this research because it is situated in a particular (education) environment practising a very specific (WBL) approach to professional learning.

Survey

The survey is a research methodology that aims to collect data from a pre-defined group of respondents to gain information and insights on various topics of interest. The survey enables the researcher to extract information from a large sample of the population, and conduct quantitative and qualitative studies of certain characteristics of the population. In this research, I shall conduct a cross-sectional survey to understand the major groups of stakeholders' perspectives on WBL at that particular point of time.

As a research methodology, surveys are usually associated with the idea of asking individuals questions. Surveys are commonly used for fact-finding; and if they are well structured and piloted, they can be a relatively cost-effective means of obtaining a huge source of useful information. I adopted a survey to capture quantitative data that would provide the landscape in which the research takes place and the general climate regarding several issues; and together with open-ended questions to capture qualitative data for insights into the experiences of respondents. Surveys can gather data from a wide range of representative respondents, and with an appropriate sample, a survey can aim at representation and provide generalised results.

Surveys entirely based upon a single method of data collection (e.g. questionnaire) may be severely limited in terms of the depth of inquiry. The survey does not provide sufficient depth in findings, but it can be supplemented by interviews or other means. The data collected through a survey can only provide snapshots of points in time rather than a focus on the underlying processes and changes. The information collected by a survey cannot provide sufficient linkage to wider theories and issues because the finding is in the forms of numeric data, tables, charts or statistics. There is a level of researcher imposition, meaning that when developing the questionnaires, the researcher is making his or her own decisions and assumptions as to what is important and what is not important. The respondents may read differently into each question and therefore reply based on their own interpretation of the question; hence, it is important to launch a pilot to ensure that the questions posed are comprehensible. I have done a pilot survey in this research before launching the full-scale survey, details of which to be discussed in later section.

There are various reasons for using a survey as a methodology in the research project. The survey can collect the perspectives of the large population in a cost-effective manner, and provide a landscape of their views on WBL at the HKWBLC, and my insider-researcher position would facilitate a good response; it is flexible and can combine other data collection methods, such as interviews and documents to provide in-depth and balanced views. By surveying the views of students, tutors, and organisations, I can obtain their perspectives on the differences between the teaching and learning styles of the WBL programme and the traditional formal education programme; the suitability of WBL learning approach for the HK professional practitioners; and suggested enhancement measures for WBL pedagogical practices, making them more appropriate to the HK professional practitioners. I used the

survey methodology for this project because it is cost-effective, flexible, and I have the access to approach different major groups of stakeholders to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data, which will provide various perspectives from the respondents.

Data Collection Methods and Analyses

In this research, I used questionnaires, interviews, and documents as data collection methods.

Questionnaires

I first conducted a set of full-scale questionnaires (please refer to Appendix 4.1 Questionnaire Full Result) to survey the landscape of the perspectives of the major stakeholders (i.e. students, tutors, and organisations); after which, I followed up with interviews on the targeted respondents to explore their views in relation to the delivery and teaching and learning of WBL in HK. The development of the areas of investigations in the questionnaires is based on the literature reviews, discussions with my supervisory team and my 16 years of teaching and learning experience in WBL at the HKWBLC.

Perspectives from Major Stakeholders

I wanted to find out the following perspectives from the major stakeholders:

Workplace skills - WBL is situated learning in the workplace, work-related and practical so items on the questionnaires explored what and how WBL related to employability and the workplace skills

WBL - the WBL concepts, curriculums, processes, and teaching and learning differ from the traditional formal education; so the questionnaires tried to examine the extent of the stakeholders' understanding of the characteristics of WBL

WBL in the HK context - the delivery of WBL could be shaped by the HK context so the

questionnaire was designed to explore the teaching and learning styles and characteristics of the local learners, and their receptiveness to WBL

Adult and distance learning - WBL is a form of adult learning and can be delivered in distance mode and/or blended mode. Therefore, the questionnaires examined how the local learners and tutors perceive these issues,

Learning support for WBL - WBL differs from traditional classroom education, and all WBL learners are working adults, who may have different demands on the teaching and learning of WBL. Hence, the questionnaires sought to find out the required learning support

Incorporating WBL into employee development/CPD - the HKWBLC wants to expand its collaborations with the organisations and develop corporate cohorts in WBL programmes. Thus the questionnaires try to find out the perspectives of the organisations on the suitability of incorporating WBL into employee development/CPD

Different Categories for the Respondents

The respondents were asked to provide their views on the above themed-questions, either by rating (showing their agreement to the statement) or ranking (indicating their importance to the statement). There were also opportunities for the respondents to put forward their comments through the inclusion of open-ended questions. In addition, I have built-in different categories for the respondents for analyses and comparisons, which included:

For the students

- Current students vs. alumni
- Age groups
- UG or PG students
- Highest education level attained before joining the WBL programme
- Management levels

For the tutors

- Module tutor/advisor/project supervisor
- Years in WBL tutoring
- Any overseas education experiences

For the organisations

- Employers/professional associations
- Number of employees/members in the organisation

Consent and Piloting of Questionnaires

All the questionnaires were conducted through Google Forms, which generate different types of analyses in terms of similarities, differences, and patterns that can then be visually presented as charts or tables for the report. For the relevant online questionnaire consent letter and question items, please refer to Appendix 3.1 - Online Questionnaire Consent Letter, and Appendix 3.2 - Online Questionnaire Items. Before conducting the full-scale questionnaire, I performed a pilot test on the questionnaires to find out if the designed questionnaire items were effective in eliciting the data that answered the research questions. The pilots helped me to implement the full-scale survey effectively, and it provided information on feedback, response rate, quality of answers to open-ended questions, demographic detail and checking on engagement, appropriateness, and relevance. I selected a purposeful sample of 30 students, 6 tutors, and 4 organisations (i.e. 2 employers and professional associations) for the pilots. The pilots' questionnaire response rates were tabulated in Table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1: Response Rates for the Pilot Questionnaires

Number of Respondents		*Targeted*	*Responded*
Students		30	14
Tutors		6	3
Organisations	Employers	2	2
	Professional Associations	2	2
	Total	40	21

After receiving feedback from the pilot questionnaires, the responses were analysed, and the modifications were tabulated in the below Table 3.2:

Table 3.2: Modifications Made to the Full-scale Questionnaires after Piloting

1	It seems that the respondents would tend to provide lower rankings to the last couple of items in the questionnaire **Action:** To 'shuffle' the sequence of items in a random manner to avoid this tendency
2	There were too many choices in some items e.g.: Workplace Skills (7 items) **Action:** To cut down the number of choices
3	Not many respondents rated the item of 'entrepreneurship/enterprising' very high, particularly the Organisations (Employers/Professional Associations). **Action:** To delete this item
4	There were several answers/suggestions from the Current Students/Alumni on one particular Open Question related to the importance and use of 'Group Learning Activities/Group works' **Action:** To make this a key question for everyone
	Other **Changes/Actions:** In summing up the responses for analyses, I adopted the use of 'Medium' rather than the average 'Means' because the former would give a clearer demarcation. I have re-aligned some of the Items to ensure I could obtain different perspectives from the major stakeholders on the same Item(s)

After making several follow-ups calls with the respondents regarding the time to complete the entire Pilot Questionnaire and the clarity of the Items posed, they all replied that it took them around 25 - 35 minutes to complete the Pilot Questionnaire, and the Items posed were clear and easy to follow.

Response Rates for the Full-scale Questionnaire

Initially, I used the email contact details on the record of students and alumni over the last eight years, I sent out 400 invitations to participate in the survey giving the purpose and aims. There were some 60 undeliverable emails, indicating a change of jobs or organisation which is not unusual in Hong Kong. I then increased the invitations to all the alumni who were in the student records (some 800 of them) for the past 12 years. The response rates for the full-scale questionnaire rates were tabulated in Table 3.3 below:

Table 3.3: Response Rates for the Full-scale Questionnaire

Sample	*Targeted*	*Response*
Students and Alumni	800	80
Tutors	40	14
Organisations (1) Employers	10	4
(2) Professional Associations	20	8
Total	870	106

Interviews

I then followed up the surveys with semi-structured interviews. The interview questions were informed by findings from the questionnaires which supplemented the information from the literature. I used purposeful sampling in selecting the targeted interviewees to participate in the interviews, the purpose of which was that these selected interviewees would be able to provide answers to the interview questions posed and their views and/or experience of WBL in the HK context, representing different groups of major stakeholders in a balanced manner. Before I interviewed these purposefully selected interviewees, I first emailed them to invite them to participate, after which, I sent them the invitation letter to take part in the interviews. The selected interviewees were different people from the questionnaire respondents.

Targeted Interviewees

The targeted interviewees from the different groups of respondents are tabulated in Table 3.4 below:

Table 3.4: Targeted Interviewees from Different Groups of Respondents

Who	Category	Number
Students	Undergraduate - Alumni	2
	Undergraduate - Current	1
	Postgraduate - Alumni	2
	Postgraduate - Current	1
		Total: 6
Tutors	Module Tutors	Total: 4
Organisations	Employers	2
	Professional Associations	2
		Total: 4

Procedures for Interviewing

I used the following procedures to interview the targeted respondents:

- Contacting the targeted interviewees and requesting their permissions to participate in the interviews
- Sending the Interview Consent Letter (Appendix 3.3). I sent out Interview Questions (Appendix 3.4) to the targeted interviewees in advance so that they may understand the purpose of the interview, give some thoughts to the interview questions, and aware that the interview will be audio-tapped before it took place
- Arranging a quiet place or room for the actual interview. I sought permission from the interviewees to audio-record the interview, by assuring them that the interview can be stopped at any time whenever they feel uncomfortable
- Conducting the interview in a comfortable manner where the interviewees can have plenty of time to respond to each interview and follow-up question

- Thanking the interviewees at the end of the interview and reassured them once again that the interview content will be kept confidential and destroyed 3 months after the completion of the research

Document Research

For the documents, I used the MU Board of Studies (BoS) minutes, which provided opportunities to the students and tutors to comment on the issues encountered and present suggestions for improvements regarding their WBL learning and teaching experiences. The BoS is held once a year and its minutes are an official record on the meetings. I have selected the past five years of BoS for postgraduate and undergraduate programmes to provide a longitudinal study. These are summarised in the following appendices. Participants names are redacted:

UG BoS Minutes (BA in WBS Programmes)

Appendix 4.4.1 (2013)
Appendix 4.4.1 (2014)
Appendix 4.4.1 (2015)
Appendix 4.4.1 (2016)
Appendix 4.4.1 (2017)

PG BoS Minutes (MA in WBS Programmes)

Appendix 4.4.2 (2012)
Appendix 4.4.2 (2013)
Appendix 4.4.2 (2014)
Appendix 4.4.2 (2015)
Appendix 4.4.2 (2016)

Analyses of Data

A combination of data collection methods was used to collect views from different sources of respondents. The analyses of quantitative and qualitative data are discussed briefly below and the full presentation and analyses of the data will be in Chapter 4.

The quantitative data of questionnaires were analysed in two parts: First, the close-ended questions were analysed through statistical methods, using 'rating' and 'ranking' and figures and tables for presentation. Second, the open-ended questions, from which I would distil key points using thematic analysis. These different sources of data will be discussed and interpreted in a frame of analysis in Chapter 5.

The qualitative data of interviews and documents were analysed by thematic analyses. Interview data are qualitative and tend to be concerned with meanings and the way people understand things and, in some cases, with patterns of behaviours. Initially, I audio-recorded the interviews and then transcribed these into texts for thematic analysis to identify major themes and sub-themes, and I used NVivo to help me to present the transcribed text for thematic analyses. The BoS minutes documents were also qualitative and tended to concern about the students' and the tutors' views and experience of the delivery of the WBL programmes and related issues and suggestions for improvements. These would also be analysed using the distillations of key point methods through thematic analysis.

Thematic Analyses

In the analyses of qualitative data of the interviews and documents, I used thematic analyses. The purpose of thematic analysis is to identify themes, i.e. patterns in the data that are of important or interesting and use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue, which is an iterative and reflective process. Bruan and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as: "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data" (p. 79) that consists of six phases:

Phase 1 - Familiarising with data

The first step in the thematic analysis is reading and re-reading the interview transcripts. At this stage, it is useful to make notes and jot down my early impressions. Based on this I read the entire data before I started coding and searching for meaning and patterns.

Phase 2 - Generating initial codes

In this phase, I started to organise my data in a meaningful and systematic way. I produced the initial codes from my data e with the aid of NVivo for presentation. Coding reduced lots of data into small chunks of meaning, which were determined by my perspective and research questions. In addition, I used the help of WBL alumni to co-code the potential codes, then, we discussed these potential codes together and came to agreement after thorough discussion.

Phase 3 - Searching for themes

A theme is a pattern that captures something significant or interesting about the data and/or research question. At this point, there was a long list of different codes, and I and the co-coder sorted them into potential themes at a broader level.

Phase 4 - Reviewing themes

Here, we reviewed and refined the themes that I and my co-coder identified in Phase 3. We kept doing this until we felt that we had a set of themes that were coherent and distinctive. This was an iterative process, where we went back and forth between themes, codes, and extracts until we felt that we had coded all the relevant data and we had the right number of coherent themes to represent our data accurately.

Phase 5 - Defining and naming themes

This was the final refinement of the themes and the aim was to capture the essence of what each theme was about and what aspect of the data each theme captured. Here, I and my co-coder created a narrative for all our themes. We needed to analyse each theme and its narrative to see if they fit into my overall narrative. We identified whether or not any of the themes contain sub-themes, and then named the themes. After continuous revision of the themes in relation to the data, we produced a final thematic map to help us to visualise the relationships between the themes.

Phase 6 - Producing the report

This stage involved the final analysis and write-up of the report. The report should be a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive, and interesting account of the story that the data told. There should be enough evidence of each theme using vivid examples from the data.

Insider-Outsider Perspectives and Research Ethics

Smyth and Holian (1999) state that the researcher who undertakes research within her own organisation has a dual-position that is influenced by the organisational context and the project inquiry process, and this dual role position can be referred to as an 'insider researcher'.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Being an Insider

My position as an insider gave me advantages as a researcher. I possess long and deep insider knowledge in the area of WBL programmes in relation to their delivery and development and have access to information from the learners and tutors. In addition, I had the support and resources from the HKWBLC and the IWBL for undertaking research which is directly relevant to the delivery of WBL programmes. I have been the lead person at the HKWBLC for 16 years. This gave me some positive advantages in the WBL research process, which included obtaining resources and support from the HKWBLC for the project, gaining access to organisational information, inviting participation from students, tutors, and organisations in the survey of questionnaires or interviews.

On the other hand, there were some disadvantages including being too close to the problems which I may have had a role in creating; being influenced too much by my own experiences; not questioning my assumptions in the workplace and not always recognising the impact that my multiple roles have on myself and others and on my own skills in delivery. Being an insider-researcher, I needed to be aware of the research environments and my personal bias in the research. I am required to observe the working environments' codes of ethics and values, for example, the university's values and codes on individual rights, data security, diversity,

professional practices and the pursuit of academic excellence. I also had to be aware of the codes of ethics and conduct of the participants' environments. The construction of knowledge and perceptions are contextualised and influenced by the environments through interactions of social, political, cultural and organisational factors. I needed to be aware of my preconceptions or bias and collaborate with others and consider the major stakeholders' needs to maintain a balanced perspective. This required me to be open to other perspectives and not to take the challenge as personal or professional criticism. In undertaking the research, I had to be reflexive. According to Edward and Potter (1992), reflexivity is an attitude that includes self-criticism and alerts the individual to the human subjective processes involved in undertaking research; warning the researcher, that knowledge is relative to their own perspective.

Roles of Insider-Outsider Perspectives

I have several roles at the HKWBLC. I am a teacher and trainer in which I have extensive professional experience. I have access to the students and tutors, who give me comprehensive perspectives of the WBL programme delivery, which may be personal and subjective but allow the construction of social meanings. On the other hand, the role of being a researcher requires me to be objective, searching for the 'positivist' side of truth. My position has its advantages and disadvantages. The advantages include support from the management and the major stakeholders in the research, access to information and familiarity with the structures and processes. The disadvantages may include being subjective; having certain personal agendas that may bias the research, and my insider position may exert an unbalanced power relationship between myself and the respondents which might lead to distorted responses. As an insider-researcher in doing the project, I needed to be aware of these multiple roles that were potentially conflicting. My multiple roles gave me the advantage of seeing things from different perspectives but my challenge in taking up this research was critiquing my perspectives and discovering what learning could emerge from that. Part of that challenge was to engage with others more fully in how they experience things while being mindful that my roles might inhibit frank responses.

Power dynamics and perceptions in the practitioner research were a potential problem as I was not only an insider researcher, I was a manager. This set up a particular dynamic which meant I had to consider carefully how to invite people into the research and be alert to and mitigate the possibility of edited responses of participants because I am seen as being in a position of authority. This might trigger concerns about job retention if insider participants were to speak openly about challenges that they might think I would take as criticism. Therefore, my invitation to participate addressed those concerns and included a written undertaking to welcome contributions without prejudice. Briggs (2002) remarks that there exists an asymmetrical power relationship in the interview, suggesting that the interviewer has control of the interview process; such as on what is said, how it is said, how it is recorded and how it is subsequently represented as findings. As the researcher (interviewer), I need to be aware of these power relations in the interviewing process and pay attention to mitigate the power dynamic through preparation, invitation, transparency, reassurance, and ethics to ensure that the respondents' views had been represented. This leads me on to more discussion about ethics.

Research Ethics

Sanders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2007) state that research ethics relates to questions about how we formulate and clarify our research topic, design our research and gain access, collect data, process and store our data, analyse data and write up our research findings in a moral and responsible way, and there are several general research ethical issues.

Ethical considerations are important to my values and the nature of reliable research. I am in a position of trust, not only personally and professionally but now as a researcher. My research aims and methods do not have the intention to cause harm, but that is not enough. I could cause unintentional harm or harm through carelessness or by not thinking things through carefully. People who read my research may use that research in some way to validate their ideas, some may make decisions based on my recommendations, some may be influenced to pay fees for such a programme. It is a significant responsibility and attention thus needs to be given to the reliability not only of the data and analysis but to my integrity.

I received permission from the senior managers of the IWBL to gather data using my proposed sources. However, my ethics approval for the whole project was gained through the IWBL Programme Approval Panel which is a subcommittee of both the University's Ethics Committee and its research degrees board. Informed consent is crucial in allowing the respondents the freedom to take part in the research and to withdraw whenever they want. The participants also need to be informed of the purpose and procedures, and what happens to the data collected after completion of the study. Please refer to Appendix 3.1 and Appendix 3.2 on the Questionnaire Consent Letters and Interview Consent Letters respectively.

I shall respect the privacy of the research participants and pay attention to the relevant Data Protection Act in the UK and the Personal Privacy and Data Protection Ordinance in HK. Confidentiality is important in case studies and I committed to writing as well as verbally to keep the respondents' identity anonymous.

As a researcher, I needed to maintain my objectivity. I had to take care that I collected data accurately and fully, and that I did not misrepresent the data collected by being selective or through statistical inaccuracies. I needed to be honest and open to gain and retain the trust of respondents to make close and in-depth studies of behaviours from respondents situated in a particular context. To elicit good data, I believe that a certain amount of trust is required, therefore consent and preparation are crucial. The establishment of that trust in the insider-researcher is vital particularly as I am an insider-researcher, in a leadership position. I had a strong working relationship with many of the participants for a number of years and they were familiar with the way I work. I hope their views on me as a professional will facilitate trust-building between me and the interviewees.

Research Quality

All research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner. The term 'validity' and 'reliability' are used in positivist traditional research approaches when justifying quality criteria for research, but in the qualitative field, these may be termed 'goodness', 'trustworthiness', or 'credibility' (Herr and Anderson, 2005) and I would add transparency and the ability to critically engage with one's own role in the research

undertaking as the researcher is the agent of change. In positivistic research, the researcher can be seen as the instrument of delivery of a particular methodology or paradigm (Maguire 2019). Quantitative and qualitative research differs in terms of their approach to defining the concepts of validity and reliability or determining the criteria for judging the quality of a research study, the definition and meaning of these terms for both research designs will be explained in separate sections below.

Quality Criteria for Quantitative Research Study

Validity is associated with an item measuring or describing what it is supposed to measure or describe (Bell, 2014). For research purposes, it was concerned with asking the appropriate research questions to obtain information that will lead to logical conclusions. There are four types of validity:

(1) Internal validity - the extent to which the conclusions regarding cause and effect are Warranted

(2) External validity - the extent to which the results of a study can be generalised to other setting (ecological validity), other people (people validity) and over time (historical validity)

(3) Constructed validity – refers to the degree to which a variable, test, questionnaire or instrument measure the theoretical concept that the researcher hopes to measure; i.e. whether the study has adequately measured the key concepts in the study

(4) Objectivity – the quantitative research follows the positivism paradigm which claims that the research will be objective, as the researcher's role is one of detachment and impartiality, and the truth is objectively portrayed, with an outsider’s point of view

According to Bell (2014), reliability is the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions. Reliability refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated. Triangulation is the process of validating the results of a study through two or more methods to check its reliability and validity. Grix (2004) defined ‘triangulation’ as the practice of drawing on a variety of data sources, which are cross-checked with one another to limit the chances of bias in the methods or sources employed. Denzin (1978) and Patton (1999) have identified that there are four types of triangulation:

(1) Triangulation of methods

This refers to checking the consistency of findings generated by different data collection methods, and in this research, I used both quantitative data (questionnaires) and qualitative data (i.e. interviews and documentation)

(2) Triangulation of sources

This involves examining the consistency of different data sources from within the same method, and in this research, I compared the perspectives of students, tutors, and organisations within the questionnaires and the interviews

(3) Triangulation of analysts

This requires using different examiners to review findings, which can provide a check on selective perception and clarify hidden items in an interpretive analysis. In this research, I used a co-coder to co-code the interview transcripts and check the interview transcripts with the interviewees

(4) Triangulation of theory/perspective

This makes use of multiple theories/perspectives to examine and interpret the data; in this research, I reviewed and used various sources of literature/concepts to provide a viewpoint to analyse and explain the materials

It is common for the practitioner-researcher to use a combination of different data collection techniques to gain a variety of perspectives in analysing the data collected, to increase the confidence in the reliability of the findings.

Quality Criteria for Qualitative Research Study

Lincoln & Guba (1985) propose that rather than the concepts of validity and reliability, an alternative set of quality criteria based on qualitative concepts need to be used to judge the trustworthiness of qualitative research. Adopting the quality criteria from Lincoln & Guba (1985), Yilmaz, K (2013) developed parallel criteria for the concept of validity and reliability in the qualitative research in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6 Criteria for Judging the Quality of a Research Study: Quantitative vs. Qualitative Terms

Aspects	*Quantitative Terms*	*Qualitative Terms*
True value	Internal validity	Credibility
Applicability	External validity (Generalisability)	Transferability
Consistency	Reliability	Dependability
Neutrality	Objectivity	Confirmability

Credibility means that the participants involved in the study found the results of the study true or credible.

Transferability is achieved if the findings of a qualitative study are transferable to another similar setting. A thorough description of the setting, context, people, actions and events studied are needed to ensure transferability.

Dependability means that the process of selecting, justifying and applying research strategies, procedures and methods is clearly explained.

Confirmability means that the findings are based on the analysis of the collected data and examined via an auditing process; i.e. the auditor confirms that the study findings are grounded in the data and inferences based on the data are logical and have clarity, high utility or explanatory power

Following the suggestions presented by Merriam, S. (1998), I used the following techniques to enhance the quality criteria of my qualitative research study:

(1) Internal validity (credibility)

- Triangulation – I used multiple investigators, multiple sources of data, or multiple methods to confirm the emerging findings. I procured two WBL alumni to assist me in co-code the questionnaire questions and interview transcripts respectively; and different sources of data from questionnaires, interviews, and documents

- Member checks – I took interview transcripts back to the interviewees and asking them if these represent their views
- Long-term observation –I used my 16 years of working experience and observations on the teaching and learning practices of WBL at the HKWBLC
- Peer examination – I asked close colleagues to comment on the findings as they emerge
- Researcher's biases – I clarified my assumptions, worldview, and theoretical orientation at the outset of the study

(2) External validity (transferability)

- Rich, thick description – I provided sufficient descriptions on the case study of the HKWBLC under the CHC environment so that readers will be able to determine how closely their situations match the research situation, and hence, whether findings can be transferred
- Typicality or modal category – I described how typical the WBL programme, teaching and learning practices, compared with others in the same class so that users can make comparisons with their own situations
- Multisite designs – I used several sources of data, especially those that maximise
- diversity in the phenomenon of interest; this will allow the results to be applied by readers to a greater range of other situations, and I adopted purposeful sampling to achieve for variations.

(3) Reliability (dependability)

- The investigator's position – I explained the assumptions and theory behind the study, my insider-researcher position vis-à-vis the groups being studied, the basis for selecting respondents and a description of them, and the social context from which data were collected (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993)
- Triangulation – I used multiple methods of data collection and analysis to strengthen reliability and internal validity
- Audit trail – I provided details of the research design, describing how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry so that an independent auditor can authenticate the findings of the study by following my research trail (Guba and Lincoln, 1981)

Reflexivity in Qualitative Research

In qualitative research, the researcher is the agent of change, not an instrument of a theory or paradigm that cannot be standardised, which means that I am personally involved in the process and inevitably have an influence on it. This is a contrast to quantitative research, where the researcher is considered to be an instrument in the service of the theory or paradigm, objective and separate from the research and so does not have an influence on the process other than to carry out the requirements of the paradigm to the letter.

Qualitative researchers need to have an enhanced awareness both of what they are bringing to the study and of how they may be influencing it, acknowledging their subjective impact on the study and endeavour to become as aware of it as possible so as to minimise or make clearer its role in shaping the findings. This enhanced awareness and practice are known as reflexivity. Reflexivity means more than a simple acknowledgment of personal subjectivity, rather, it goes beyond to consider how our thoughts, feelings understandings, reactions and experience in relation to the research context help to shape our insights and interpretations (Willig, 2013). Therefore, qualitative researchers are required to make their awareness of their subjectivity as explicit as possible to themselves and to the readers.

Willig (2013) suggests that the researcher influences and shapes the research process in an overarching manner in two ways: as a person and as a theorist, and so the researcher should engage in both personal and epistemological reflexivity. Personal reflexivity is a reflection on how the assumptions arising from our beliefs, values, experiences and so on, inform our pre-existing knowledge of the topic, shape us as people and researchers, and inform the way the research is carried out. It also requires us to be aware of how the experience and process of conducting the research have affected and possibly changed us during and after we have carried out the research. Epistemological reflexivity involves thinking about the ways in which knowledge has been generated in the study. It is a reflection on how assumptions about the world are brought to the research through the research questions we asked, and the methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation we bring to it.

Tobin & Begley (2004) suggest that there are two ways of developing a reflexive practice in the research process; first, making my presence and subjectivity explicit, second, keeping a

reflexive journal. I made clear of my ontological being and subjectivity in the research context and to the readers of the study; and wrote down notes and questions on my experience of the research process and record my thoughts, feelings, understanding, reactions and experiences in relation to the research process, which include data collection and transcription, data analysis and interpretations, and how I believe my subjectivity may have an influence throughout the research.

Limitations of the Research Design

This research project represents a snapshot in time by capturing the various contexts and situations of WBL programme deliveries at the HKWBLC. As the practitioner researcher, I have adopted a 'constructivist' stance and 'interpretivist' lens to this investigation, and there are several limitations to the research.

Sampling and Targeted Respondents

I sent out some 800 questionnaires to all UG and PG students in the full-scale survey to get as much feedback as possible. I used purposeful sampling in the 16 interviews aiming to obtain feedback from the different groupings of interviewees. In fact, all targeted respondents were known to me as I am an insider-researcher. There existed certain power relationships between the respondents and me; in the form of a student - teacher, tutor - programme leader, and professional network relationships. While steps were taken to reassure participants, in some cases, the response may be polite in nature in order not to cause any embarrassment which is expected in Hong Kong culture.

Cultural Aspects

One focus of the project was exploring WBL teaching and learning practices in the HK context. The use of Hofstede's (1986) cultural dimensions in the questionnaire may not have fitted completely into the description of the HK Chinese in recent years because there have

been increasing influences from mainland China on HK's institutions, commerce, government, and social and cultural practices since the transfer or return of sovereignty in 1997 to China.

WBL Frameworks and Typologies

The HKWBLC has only two education partners; namely, HKU SPACE and HKMA. It does not provide all three typologies of WBL programmes proposed by Nottingham (2012), namely: discipline-centred - traditional practice-based degree within the discipline; learner-centred – transdisciplinary knowledge with content from the workplace; and employer-centred – workforce development, project-based. Unlike the IWBL, the HK Centre only provided the discipline-centred WBL programmes in HK and did not provide any data for discussion on the 'learner-centred' and 'employer-centred' typology of provision. In addition, it did not provide the more recent UK 'Apprenticeship' Scheme based on WBL principles in HK. The literature in the review explored was mainly adopted and developed in the UK and the WBL programmes discussed in this research are related entirely to the Middlesex University IWBL's WBL framework and provisions. This research only explored the WBL (MU) programme in HK and did not cover other UK universities' variations of WBL provisions and different delivery systems.

Research Bias

As the researcher, I am also influenced by working at the HKWBLC for 16 years. Inevitably a deep-rooted mindset and conception on WBL(MU) are present which I brought into the investigation, though I have been transparent about my bias and have taken steps to mitigate it. Robson (2002) suggests that the researcher needs to recognise the sources of bias and acknowledge the assumptions within the research process. This is particularly true when undertaking a 'constructivist' and an 'interpretivist' approach and I found this a helpful caution in this research project. One way to minimise such adverse effects is to use reflexivity (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005). Therefore, I sought to be reflective enough to maintain both an engagement and a distance which was not always easy with the busy running of the

programmes and the accompanying. As a worker-researcher, I became more mindful of how much I was embedded in and imbued with organisational cultures which I had absorbed without being fully aware. I attempted in this busy working and researching life to maintain regular contact with my supervisory team to minimise any adverse effects; checked my interview findings with the respondents; cross-checked the findings from different sources and methods and discussed my ideas, thoughts, understanding, and findings with close colleagues. Nevertheless, given my background a degree of bias is inevitable.

The development of a research design involves examination of philosophies, contexts, personal, professional and organisational situations and influences on the choice of research approach, methodology, and methods. In the beginning, I declared my ontological being and epistemological position in the quest for knowledge which would influence my choice of research design. This was followed by a review of my professional and organisational situations, which encouraged a 'constructivist' and 'interpretivist' approach to making sense of the situations. Transparency is an indicator of reliability and quality in qualitative research; therefore, it was important to be transparent in what informed my interpretation of the results. My investigation relates to the study of the educational phenomenon on teaching and learning and pedagogical practices of the WBL programmes at the HKWBLC in HK, which required me to be informed by education and social research methodology and methods. I use the mixed methods approach and adopted the boundaries of the case study due to the specific focus and locus and a quantitative approach for benchmarking and landscaping the background to better contextualise the focus. That landscaping led me to include the different perspectives of WBL students, tutors, and organisations. I further identified the use of questionnaires, interviews, and documents as a suitable means of collecting empirical data in relation to my practitioner-researcher position. The relative roles of being an insider-researcher were also examined and the crucial ethical and confidential issues pertaining to WBL research were explored. The research quality criteria for both quantitative and qualitative research studies were examined and I applied some measures to enhance the quality criteria of my qualitative research. Finally, there was the vital element of ensuring my role would be regularly checked through adopting a reflexivity attitude to each stage of my work thereby regulating any conscious or unconscious bias.

4 Data Presentation and Analyses

Questionnaire Data Presentation and Analyses

This chapter deals with the data presentation and analyses of the questionnaires, interviews, and documents. The data presentation and analyses will be discussed in sequence. First, the questionnaire items that consist of closed and open-ended questions designed to elicit the respondents' views on and experience of WBL and suggestions for improvement for WBL in the HK context. The full results of the questionnaires present the perspectives of major stakeholders on WBL, which is attached in Appendix 4.1. Regarding the questionnaires' closed and open-ended questions, I distilled the keywords and key concepts from these two types of responses. Second, for the interview data, I used thematic analysis with the support of NVivo to extract the major themes and subordinate themes from the interview data to highlight the different kinds of impact affecting WBL students and the summarised key points against the research objectives. Third, in the document data, I used the minutes of the Board of Studies for the past 5 years that recorded the views and issues raised by the students and tutors regarding the delivery of the undergraduate and postgraduate WBL programme in HK. The keywords and key concepts from these were distilled and highlighted, together with the learning derived from them.

Questionnaire Presentation and Analyses

Three questionnaires (for students, tutors, and organisations) were developed after a careful initial literature review, discussions with colleagues, further literature review, and advice from my supervisory team. The questionnaires were piloted and revised for the development of more appropriate questions. In some of the questionnaire items, the students, tutors, and organisations were asked different statements because of their respective roles and perspectives. The full-results consist of three sets of questionnaires collecting data from the different groups of targeted respondents:

(1) Students: Current Student and Alumni of UG and PG in WBL(MU) programmes

(2) Tutors: Adviser/Project Supervisor and Module Tutor

(3) Organisations: Employer and Professional Association

Profile and Number of Questionnaire Respondents

I sent out around 680 questionnaires and the number of respondents was 106. The numbers of respondents from the different target groups are detailed in Table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1 Profile and Number of Questionnaire Respondents

	Students		Tutors		Organisations	
	UG	PG	Advisers/ Supervisors	Module Tutors	Employers	Professional Associations
Number of respondents	46	34	10	4	6	6
Sub-total	80		14		12	
Total	106					

The Use of Rating and Ranking in the Questionnaire

After piloting and benchmarking, the questionnaire items focused on eliciting views in six areas of concern. The sequencing of the questionnaire items in different areas was 'shuffled' to ensure the internal reliability of responses. Two types of data collection scale were adopted; 'rating' and 'ranking'. For the questions requesting respondents to rate their feedback, a 5-points-scale from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree' was applied. The scale used appears below:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know/NA
Response						

An option of "Don't know/NA" was provided in the 5-points-scale for respondents who were not sure on how to answer the question.

Due to the number of respondents of "Module Tutor", "Employer" and "Professional Association" being comparatively low, compared to 'Current Student and Alumni of UG and PG in WBL programmes'; the above scale was grouped into "Agreed", 'Neutral' and Disagreed' to obtain a clearer picture of the overall positive percentage rate. The responses of 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree' were combined and treated as 'Agreed'; the responses of 'Neutral' remained unchanged; the responses of 'Strongly disagree' and 'Disagree' were combined and treated as 'Disagreed'.

For the questions requesting respondents to rank their feedback in order of importance on the provided items, a ranking from 1 to the number of items was provided. Number '1', the most important and '6' the least important item.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Response						

The above scale was also grouped into 'High, 'Medium' and 'Low' to obtain a clearer picture of the overall ranking percentage, because the number of 'Module Tutor', 'Employer' and 'Professional Association' responses was comparatively low compared to 'Current Student and Alumni of UG and PG in WBL programmes'. In this case, the responses of rank #1 and rank #2 were combined and referred to as 'High', the responses of rank #3 and rank #4 were combined and referred to as 'Medium', and the responses of rank #5 and rank #6 were combined and referred to as 'Low'.

Distilling Key Points from the Questionnaire - Close-ended Questions

In this section, I distilled the key points from the questionnaire's closed questions. WBL programmes differ from the other traditional education programmes and are work-related, and therefore significant to professional practitioners that may wish to inquire and develop their learning from practice and to achieve higher level awards. it was anticipated that those

respondents who had experienced the WBL programme, might find WBL different from traditional education programmes due to its intention to bring about more effective practice through its different approaches to learning and teaching. WBL programme can be seen as having the flexibility to be delivered remotely or through face-to-face meetings, targeted at working professionals with the expectations that work is the focus and locus of learning. The diverse student profile requires flexibility and skills on the part of the tutors who need to be experienced in working with the challenges of both a non-traditional approach and a variety of workplace contexts. Following the literature review, the questionnaire questions were designed to gather views from the three major groups of stakeholder respondents in the following areas:

- Workplace skills
- WBL
- WBL in HK contexts
- Adult learning
- Distance learning
- Learning support
- Incorporating WBL into employee development/CPD

The Questionnaire Full Results appears in Appendix 4.1, I deal with the presentation and analyses of the close-ended questions first and the open-ended questions later.

Workplace Skills

Figure 4.1

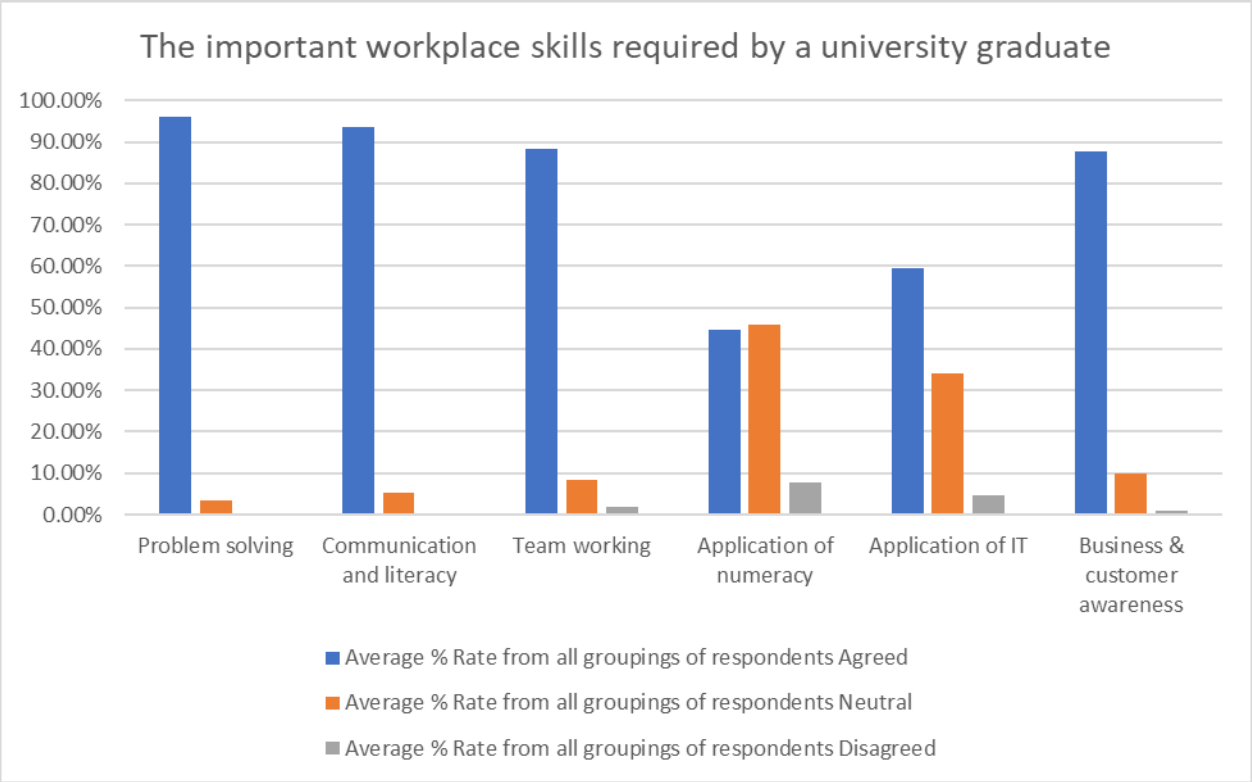


Figure 4.1 shows that 'Problem-solving', 'Communication and literacy', 'Teamworking', and 'Business & customer awareness' are the highest four rated workplace skills from all respondents, with each having about 90% agreement rate. The highest two workplace skills that graduates would like to develop were 'Communication and literacy' (68%) and 'Problem-solving' (55%). These findings align with the employability skills categories of the CBI report (2010). However, the ratings for 'Application of Numeracy' and 'Application for IT' are relatively lower than the other four Employability Skills, probably because in general, IT skills training is conducted from primary schools to secondary schools which make IT skills a common literacy expectation among professionals. In addition, the common availability of IT equipment and technology makes it unnecessary for the general practitioner to acquire advanced Numeracy skills unless they are in advanced engineering or technological fields.

Figure 4.3

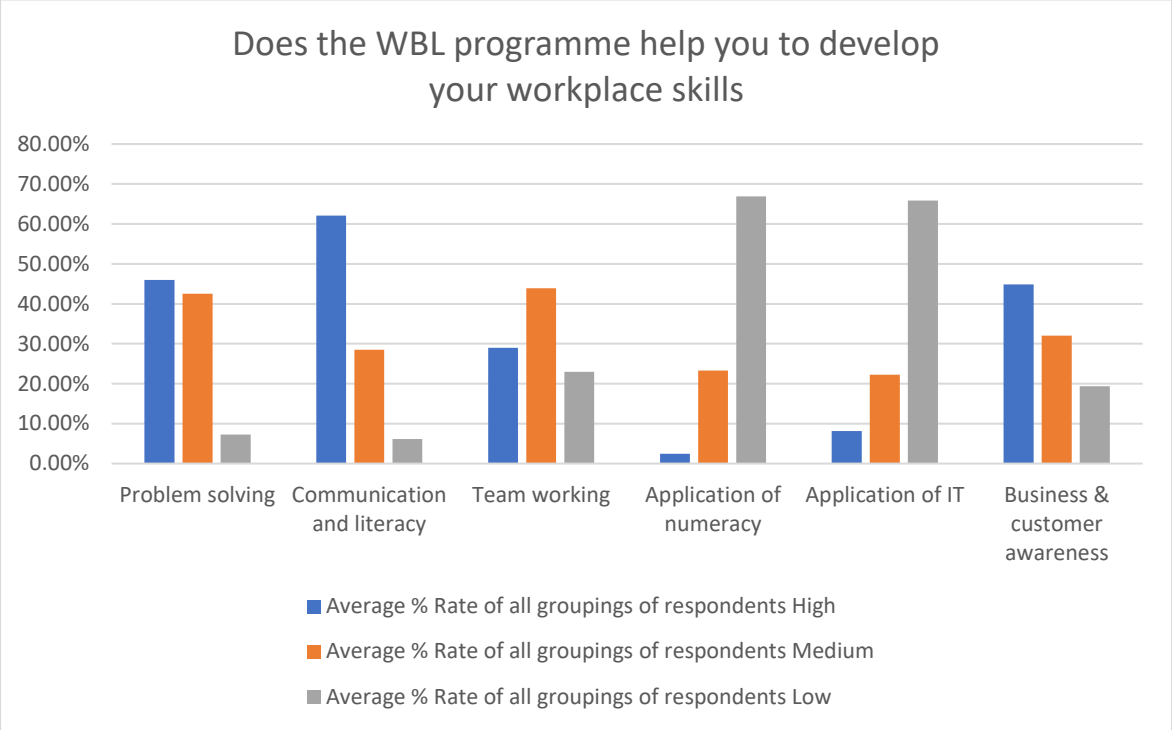


Figure 4.3 shows that close to 50% and 65% of respondents agreed that WBL would help to develop their 'Problem-solving and 'Communication and literacy' respectively. On the other hand, a low percentage of the respondents agreed that their WBL programme helps to develop workplace skills in 'Application of numeracy' (3%) and 'Application of IT' (9%). As mentioned by Lyons & Young (2008), WBL enhances participants' learning in employability skills. However, the ratings for 'Application of numeracy' and 'Application of IT' skills were comparatively much lower than the other four workplace skills probably because we did not teach any module related to these two skills. In the future, it is likely we will look at teaching modules such as 'Managing Data' and 'Effective Literature Searches' to enhance the WBL students' competences in these areas.

Figure 4.5

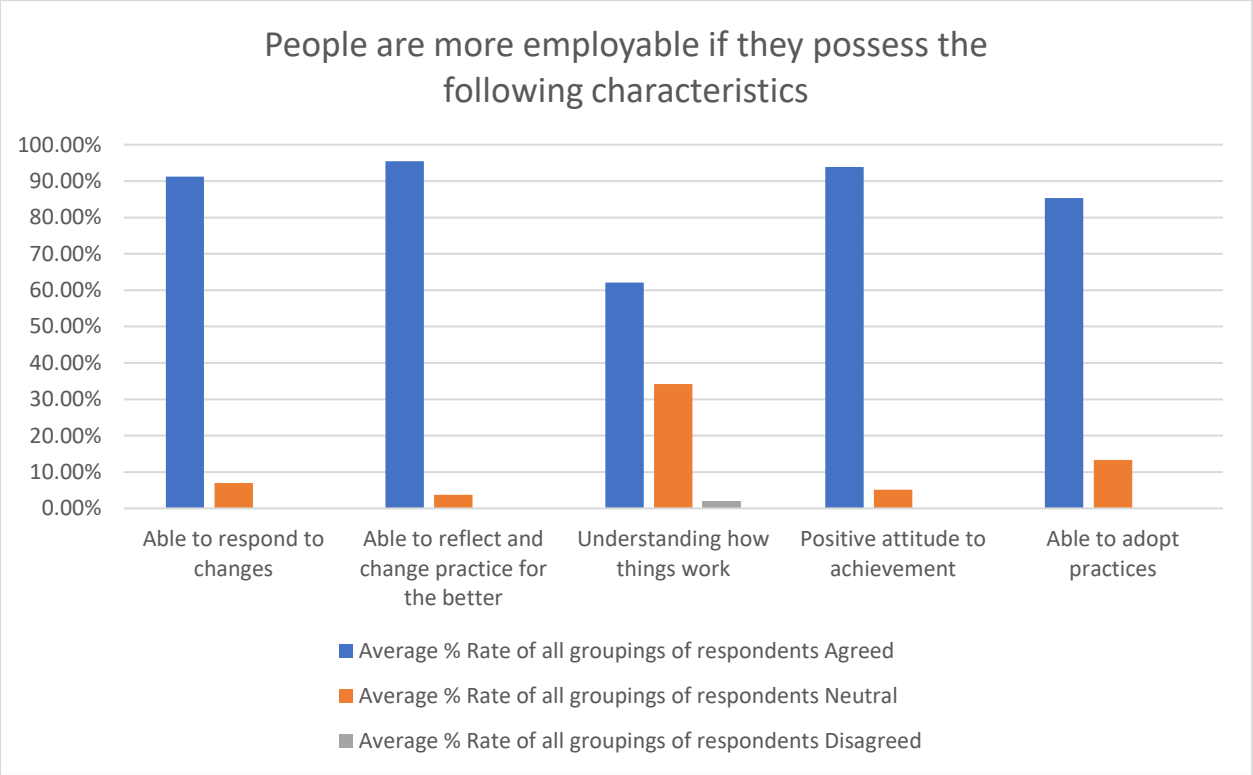


Figure 4.5 reveals that people are more employable if they possess certain characteristics; which include 'Able to reflect and change practice for the better' (95%) and 'Able to adopt practices' (85%), which are essential learning outcomes of the WBL programme HK. The data confirms the top four workplace skills put forward by the CBI (2010), and it shows that WBL programmes in HK are work-related and important to the professional practitioners, and the WBL programme's learning outcomes are closely aligned to the employability characteristics as reported in CBI (2010).

Figure 4.4

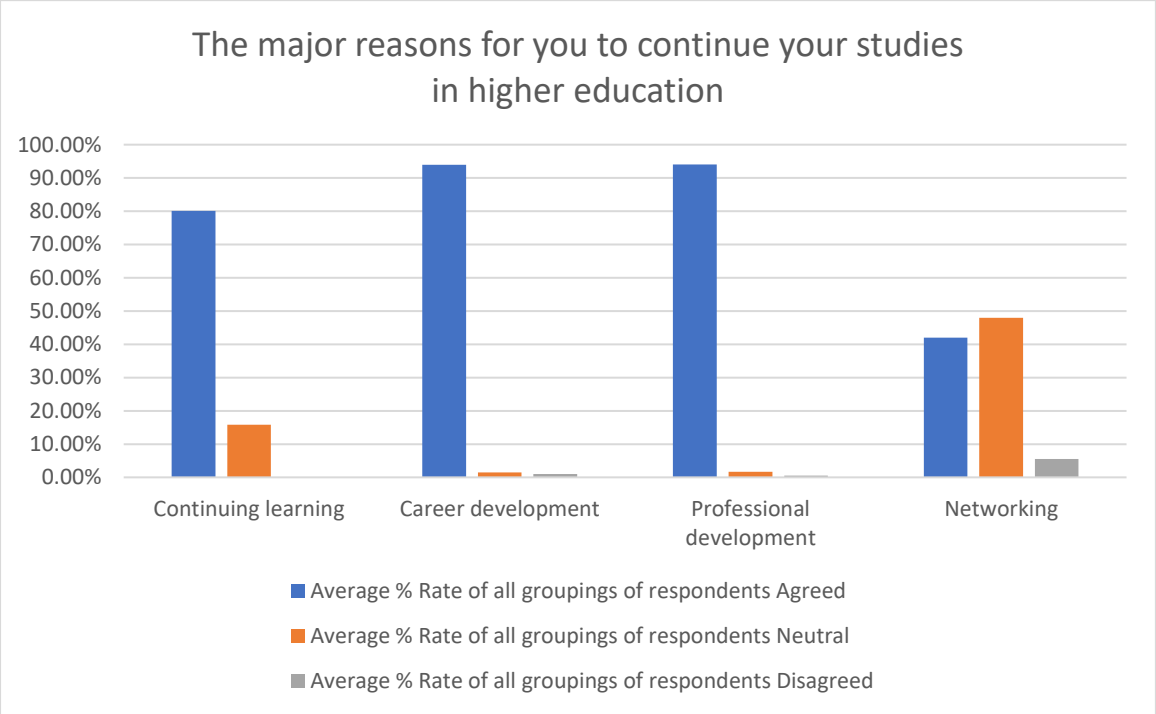


Figure 4.4 demonstrates that 'Professional development' (95%), 'Career development' (93%), and Continuing learning' (80%) are rated as the highest three reasons for respondents to continue their HE studies. The findings reflect closely to the WBL learners' learning needs as stated in Brenan's (2005) report and the reasons for undertaking the WBL programmes in the Impact Study Report presented by Costley, Shukla and Inceoglu (2009).

Figure 4.6

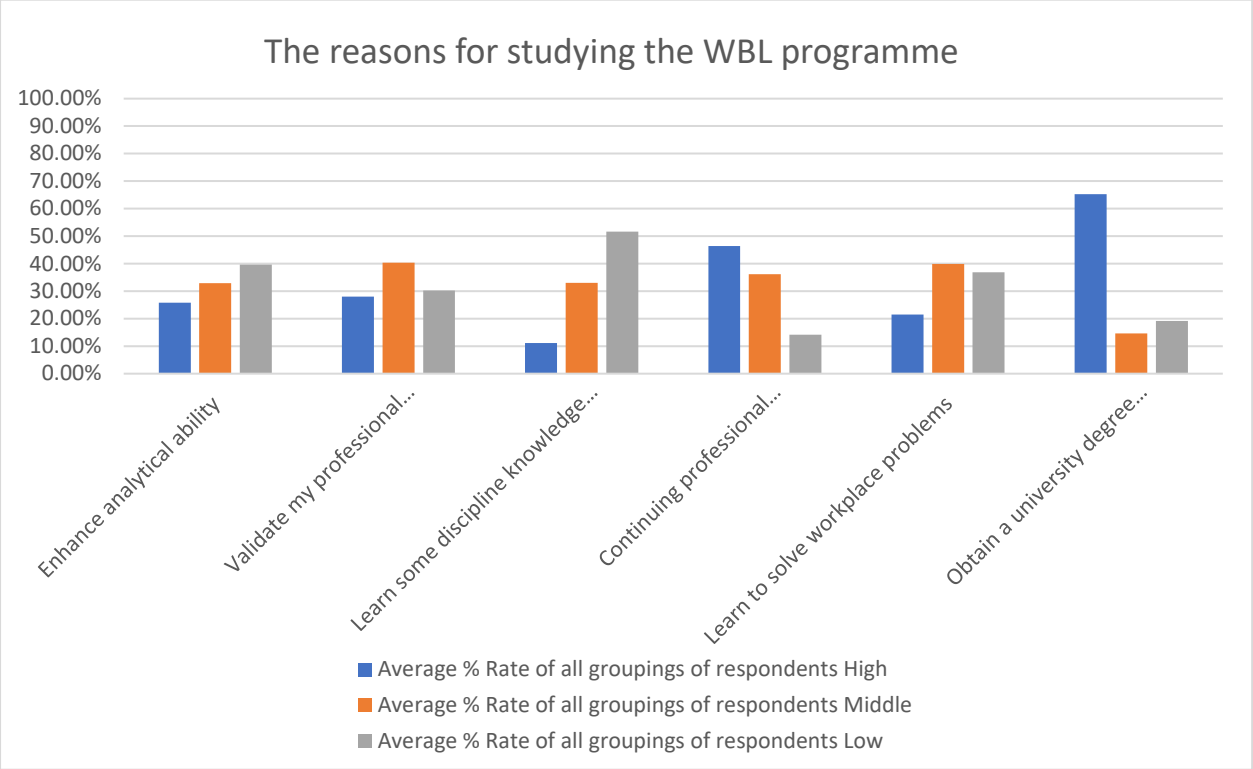
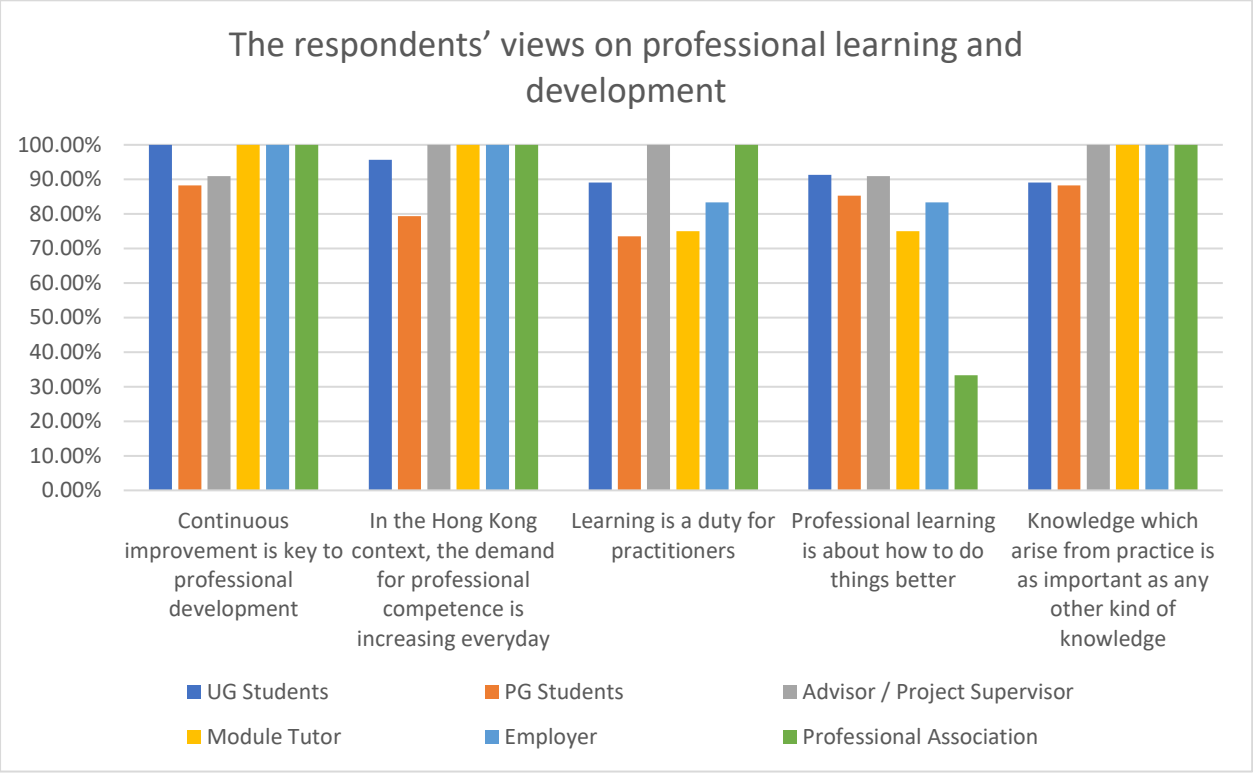


Figure 4.6 reveals that the reasons for joining WBL programmes in HK are diverse, with the highest-ranked reason being to 'Obtain a university degree qualification' (68%), and the second-highest ranked reason being for 'Continuing professional development' (48%). The findings reflect the reasons for undertaking the WBL qualification detailed in the report by Costley, Shukla and Inceoglu (2009) The fact that 'Obtain a university degree qualification' scored the highest rating simply seems to reflect HK students' practical orientation toward studying.

Figure 4.16



In Figure 4.16, all three main groupings of respondents have clear views on professional learning and development and agreed (ranging from 88% to 100%) that 'Continuous improvement is key to professional development'. These echo the views expressed by Crockett (2018) that CPD is important for professional development and that the Mode 2 informal learning of WBL is important in the organisational context (Gibbon, 1994 and 1998). However, the Professional Associations have their own body of knowledge, code of practices, and standards of performance; therefore, they rate the item on 'Professional learning is about how to do things better' relatively lower than the other groups of respondents, for the Professional Associations, doing things better may not be enough.

Figure 4.17

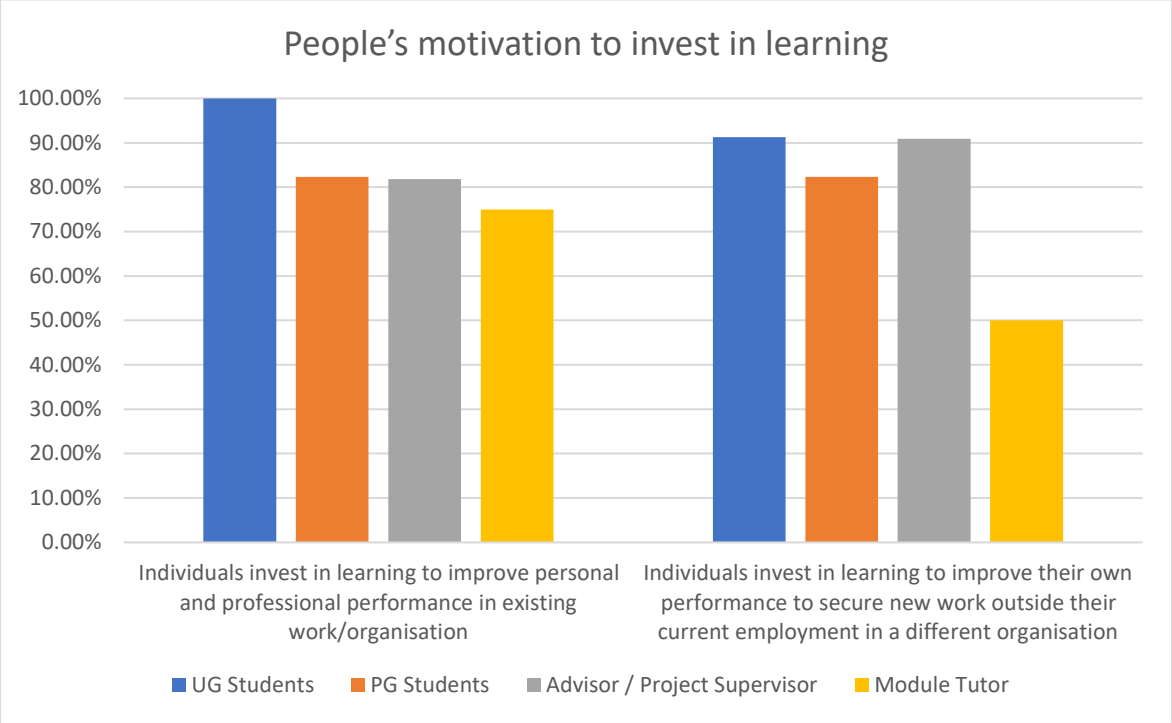


Figure 4.17 demonstrates that for an individual employee, the motivations to invest in learning for current and future use are very high, ranging from 80% to 100 % respectively for both UG and PG students. There are two major reasons for investing in learning; first, performance improvement; and second, change employment, which has been categorised by Penn, Noxon & Shewell (2005).

WBL Experience

Figure 4.8

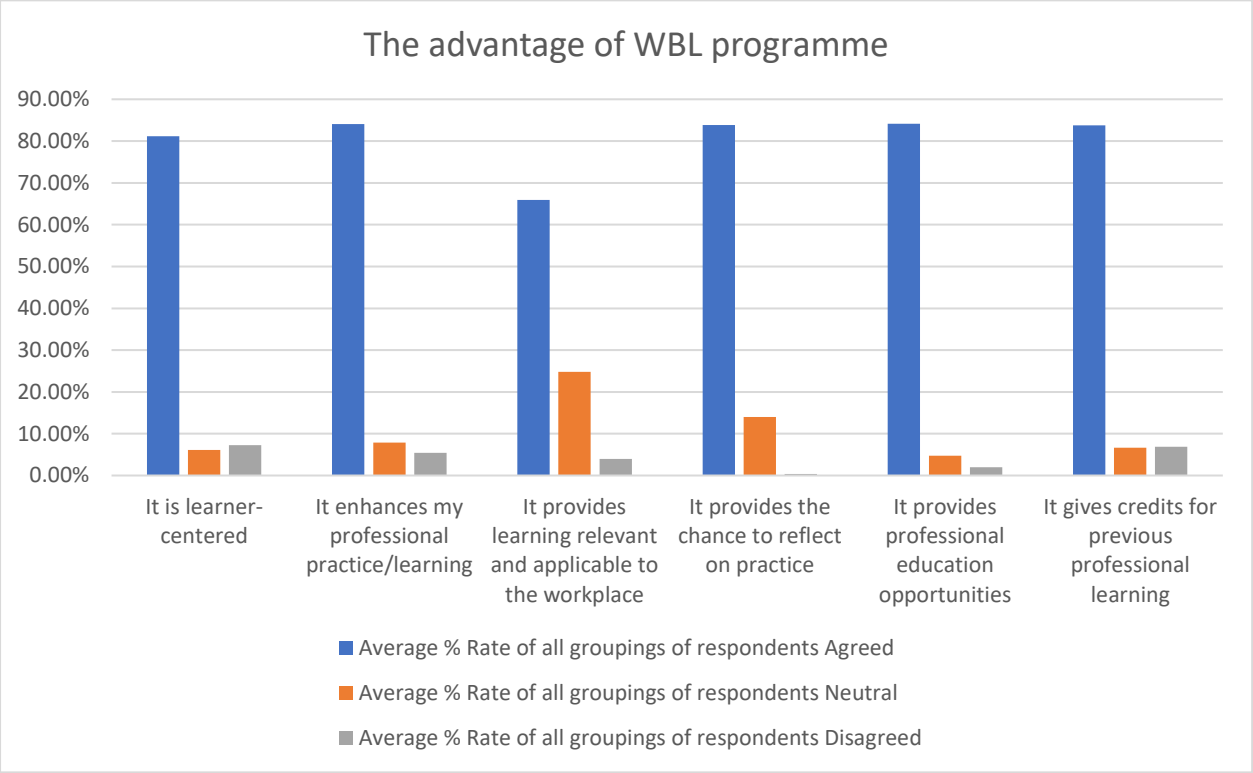


Figure 4.8 shows that almost all types of respondents agreed (above 80%) that WBL programmes had several advantages, which include: 'It is learner-centred', 'It enhances my professional practice/learning', 'It provides a chance to reflect on practice', 'It provides professional education opportunities, and 'It gives credits for previous professional learning'. These findings reflect the benefits and values identified by the European Training Foundation (2013) and Lester and Costley (2010). The Review of Learning module provides the opportunity for professional practitioners to prepare an APEL claim. This is one of the distinct characteristics of the WBL programme, which opens the door to professional practitioners who previously did not enter higher education.

Figure 4.10

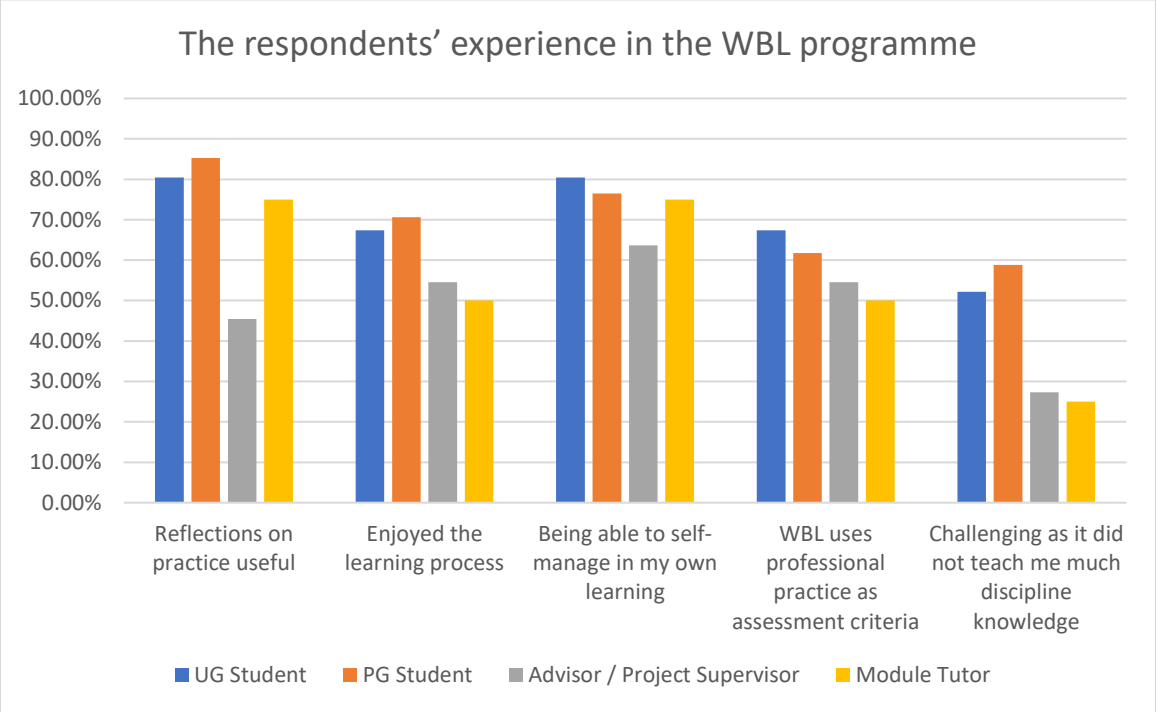


Figure 4.10 shows that around 80% of Students agreed that their WBL experience enables 'Reflections on practice is useful', and 'Being able to self-manage in my own learning'. Around 60% - 70% of Students enjoyed the WBL process and the WBL assessment uses professional practice criteria; and around half (52% - 58%) of students find it challenging as it did not teach much disciplinary knowledge. These findings are reasonable as they represent the characteristics of the WBL programme which include (1) Emphases on reflective learning, (2) Student-centred learning process, (3) Flexible adult learning mode, (4) Use of generic professional competencies assessment criteria, and (5) Process-oriented and not content-oriented. The tutors hold similar views on the item of 'Reflections on practice useful', 'Enjoyed the learning process', Being able to self-managed in my own learning', and 'WBL uses professional practices at assessment criteria'; except the last item of 'Challenging as it did not teach me much discipline knowledge' which shows a relatively lower rating of less than 30 %, because the tutors understand that WBL has no fixed curriculum.

Table 4.13 Achievement and Understanding of Assessment

Statements for UG and PG Students	**UG Students**	**PG Students**	**Statements for Adviser/ Supervisor**	**Adviser / Supervisor**	**Module Tutor**
My achievement relates to how much I learn	71.74%	76.47%	Students successful achievement relate to how much they learned	81.82%	75.00%
I understand how my coursework is assessed	76.09%	67.65%	The students understand how their coursework is assessed	27.27%	75.00%

Table 4.13 highlights that there is a high level of agreement across the Students (from 72% - 76%) and the Tutors (75% - 82%) on 'My achievement relates to how much I learn'. However, a low percentage of Adviser/Supervisor (27%) think that the Students understand how their coursework is assessed, which might imply that it would be difficult for the students to complete their coursework satisfactorily. On the other hand, there are some 24% of UG students and 33% of PG, who do not understand how their coursework is assessed. These results seem to indicate there is a need to enable the students to understand the coursework assessment criteria.

Table 4.14 The Overall Experience in WBL Programme

Statements for UG and PG Students	UG Students	PG Students	Statements for Advisor/ Supervisor	Adviser / Supervisor	Module Tutor
I take initiative in contacting my tutor	65.22%	70.59%	I take initiative in asking my students to contact me	72.73%	100.00%
I am flexible with an open syllabus content	69.57%	70.59%	I am flexible tutoring an open syllabus content	9.09%	100.00%
I am comfortable in un-structured learning situations	58.70%	52.94%	I am comfortable in un-structured tutoring situations	45.45%	100.00%
I enjoy working on problem-solving assignments	82.61%	79.41%	I enjoy tutoring on problem-solving issues and assignments	72.73%	100.00%

There are separate sets of statements for the Students and the Tutors because they undertake different roles. However, the Students and the Tutors enjoyed working and tutoring problem-solving assignments respectively. Table 4.14 shows that there was a medium to the high percentage (i.e. 65% - 100 %) of Students and Tutors in establishing contacts with each other. Students and Tutors seem to be positive about the overall experience on the WBL programme; except that around 45% to 59% agreed for Adviser/Supervisor and Students respectively on 'I am comfortable in unstructured learning situations'; and a low 9% agreed for Adviser/Supervisor on: 'I am flexible tutoring an open syllabus content'; which may imply the Adviser/Supervisor require more training and development on tutoring an open syllabus and in unstructured situations. However, the Module Tutors are very positive about their overall WBL experience, and there was a 100% agreement on this section. The Students also

had a high agreement rate (80%) on ‘I enjoy working on problem-solving assignments’ and ‘I like professional knowledge being valued’. The low rating of around 9% of the Adviser/Supervisor showed that most of them are not accustomed to conducting teaching without a fixed syllabus, which means that better induction for the Adviser/Supervisor is needed.

Table 4.9 Main Challenges for Professional Practitioner in Joining the WBL Programme

	Undergraduate			Postgraduate		
	Agreed	Neutral	Disagreed	Agreed	Neutral	Disagreed
Lack of English language proficiency	58.70%	19.57%	15.22%	41.18%	29.41%	23.53%
Contacting my tutors	47.83%	28.26%	19.57%	26.47%	29.41%	38.24%
Understanding the programme syllabus	69.57%	21.74%	8.70%	50.00%	23.53%	20.59%
Understanding learning assessment requirements	80.43%	10.87%	6.52%	52.94%	20.59%	17.65%
The tutors acting as learning facilitators rather than as traditional teachers	65.22%	21.74%	10.87%	47.06%	26.47%	20.59%
Understanding the learning outcomes	65.22%	26.09%	4.35%	44.12%	35.29%	14.71%

Table 4.9 demonstrates that most of the challenges for professional practitioners in joining the WBL programme relate to understanding of the WBL features, which include ‘Understanding programme syllabus’, ‘Understanding learning assessment requirements’,

‘The tutor serving as a facilitator rather than as traditional teacher’ and ‘Understanding the learning outcomes’; whereas ‘Lack of English language proficiency’ is agreed by 60% of respondents as a challenge in joining the WBL programme. There are other open comments on challenges from Students that include: “attending lesson with my heavy business travel schedule”, “Limited knowledge input from WBL and most depend on self-reflection”, “Time management and working and studying at the same time”, and “To meet the deadline in submitting assessment is a real challenge”. Further analyses of the rating results show that the PG students tended to have lower ratings on challenges than the UG students as underlined in Table 4.9 above.

The WBL programme is different from traditional education programme in several aspects, such as the tutor serving as the facilitator, the workplace is used to guide the syllabus, and the learning outcome and assessment are generic and professional. Hence, there is room for improving both the students’ and the tutors’ understandings of the characteristics of the WBL programme.

Figure 4.24-1

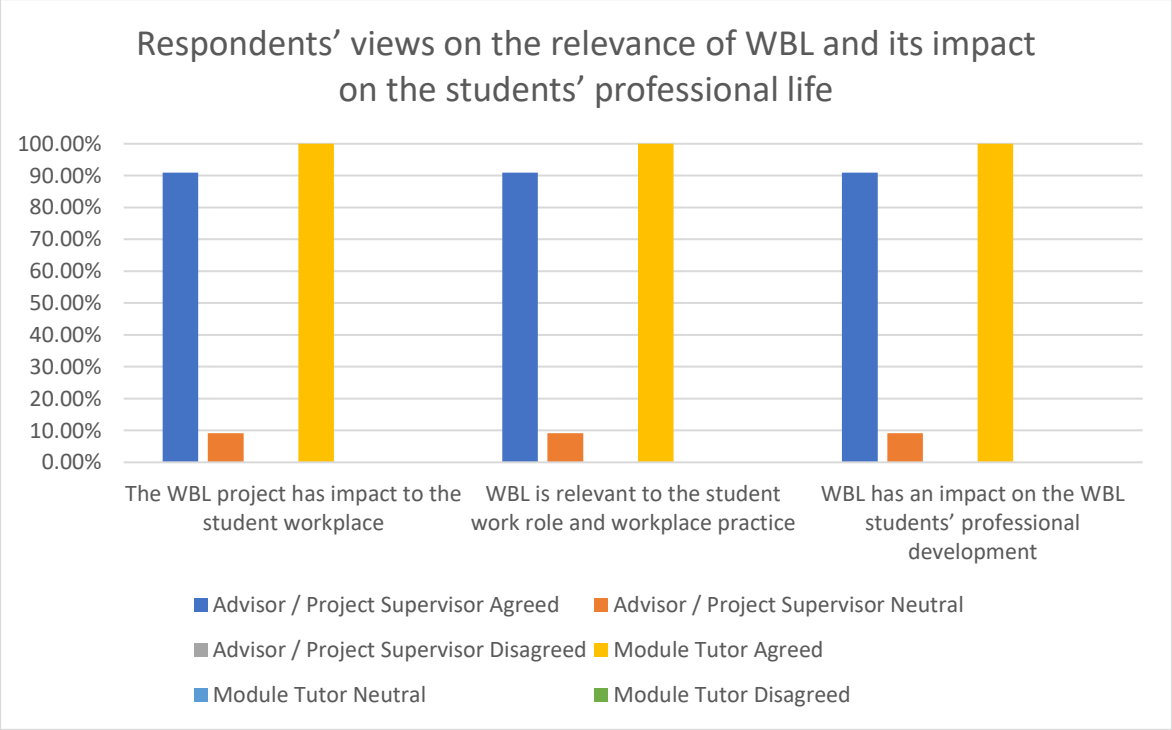


Figure 4.24-1 exhibits the respondents' view on the relevance of WBL and its impact on the students' professional practice. The agreement rate was 90% and over on all items. These results are not surprising as WBL is work related and relevant to the students' work role and practice, and it facilitates professional development and has an impact in the workplace, which has been supported by Impact Study Report of Costley, Shukla, and Inceoglu (2009) and review of Lester and Costley (2010).

Cultural Differences in Teaching & Learning

A WBL programme is different from a traditional programme in its pedagogy, process, teaching and learning style, targets learning groups and mode of delivery, and so would require additional support.

Table 4.11 The Student-teacher Relationship

Statements for UG and PG Students	**UG Students**	**PG Students**	**Statement for Adviser/ Supervisor and Module Tutor**	**Adviser/ Supervisor**	**Module Tutor**
I never argue with my teacher	50.00%	23.53%	I encourage students to have more discussions and debates	90.91%	100.00%
My effectiveness of learning is directly related to the excellence of the teacher	84.78%	55.88%	The students should be responsible for their own learning	81.82%	100.00%

I prefer the teacher tells me what to do	63.04%	35.29%	I prefer to teach the students what to do	18.18%	0.00%
I enjoy the freedom of the student-centred approach	65.22%	79.41%	I expect the students to take a more active role in learning	81.82%	100.00%
I expect the teacher to plan for my development direction	45.65%	20.59%	I expect the students to have better time management and planning for their studies	81.82%	100.00%

Table 4.11 presents the 'Student-teacher relationship' that entails cultural differences in teaching and learning, and teaching and learning styles. There are two sets of statements here, one for the Students and another for the Tutors:

1. For the Students

In Chinese culture, there is a didactic student-teacher relationship and students will not normally disagree or challenge the teacher, because they have traditionally been taught to have high regard for the teachers and treat them as the source of knowledge (Nield, 2004). There is a different perspective on the purpose of education from the WBL perspective. However, the questionnaire findings show that at least 50% of UG students and 75% of PG students did have learning dialogues and debates with their teacher. The disagreement portion for the PG students is double that of the UG students, which may be due to having more professional experience and business maturity than the UG.

According to Salili (2001), traditional Chinese culture holds the belief that the success of the students depends on the excellence of the teacher. More than 85% of the UG respondents

agree with this statement, whereas only 55% of the PG students agree with this statement, which may due to the latter's higher maturity and self-directness.

Chan (1999) states that Chinese culture favours the use of a didactic teaching style over a facilitative teaching style. However, the findings show that close to 40% of UG students did not prefer the teacher to tell them what to do, and the corresponding figure for the PG students was 65%. These can be explained by the fact that all students are professional adult learners and did not fully accept the transmitting teaching style.

WBL uses adult learning principles and adopts a learner-centred approach in facilitating participants' learning (Knowles 1985), which are essential characteristics of the WBL approach (Boud 1996). WBL is student-centred, and the PG students had a very high agreement rate close to 80%; whereas the UG students also had a high agreement rate of 65%.

As suggested by the Higher Education Academy (2017), self-directed learning is essential to lifelong learning and professional development. Students are expected to be able to review their professional learning thus far and identify required competencies for future professional developments. The findings show that more than 45% of UG students expect the teacher plans the development of programme for them; whereas, the corresponding figure for the PG students is just around 20%, a relatively lower agreement rate. This seems to be an area in which students need help to develop.

2. For the Tutors

Active student involvement in the learning process will result in better engagement of the students and produce more learning (Ramsden, 1992). In this case, both the Adviser/Supervisor and Module Tutor show a very high agreement rate of 91% and 100% respectively.

All the Students are working adults, and according to Knowles (1985), they should be responsible for their own learning. The resultant agreement rates were 82% and 100% for the Advisor/Supervisor and Module Tutors respectively.

The facilitative teaching style is deemed effective for adult learners, and the majority of the tutors seem to have sufficient understanding of the characteristics of the WBL students who are working adults (Knowles 1985) and use the facilitative teaching style. The findings show that only 18% of the Adviser/Supervisor adopted a didactic teaching style, and none of the Module Tutors use a didactic teaching style.

As suggested by the Higher Education Academy (2017), self-directed learning is important for the continuous professional development of the professional practitioners, who should be able to plan their own studies. The resultant agreement rates were very high, 82% for the Advisor/Supervisor and 100% for the Module Tutors.

It is possible that the higher agreement rates among module tutors and advisers/supervisors are partly due to cultural differences. Module tutors and advisers/supervisors are much more familiar with the western academic culture and may have assumptions about how independently students should behave.

Table 4.12 The Student-participation

Statements for UG and PG Students	**UG Students**	**PG Students**	**Statements for Adviser/ Supervisor**	**Adviser/ Supervisor**	**Module Tutor**
My views are well received even if they are different from the others	71.74%	67.65%	Diverse views in class/project discussion are well received	27.27%	25.00%
I enjoy sharing my views with my tutor and fellow students	89.13%	76.47%	The students enjoyed sharing their views with tutor and peers	27.27%	25.00%

I enjoy some forms of group learning activities/ group work	78.26%	76.47%	I encourage the student to have some forms of group learning activities/group work	81.82%	100.00%
I feel inhibited sharing my views	19.57%	8.82%	I encourage the students to express and share their views	90.91%	75.00%
I only speak up when called on by the teacher	34.78%	17.65%	The students were not active in class/project discussion	36.36%	50.00%
I sometimes challenge others' views during discussions	36.96%	70.59%	I encourage the students to challenge others' views during class/project discussions	45.45%	75.00%

Table 4.12 presents the 'student-participation' on cultural differences in teaching and learning.

The findings show that 72% of UG Students and 65% of PG Students had relatively high rates of agreement on 'My views are being well received even if they are different from the others'; however, the Tutors think differently, and only with a low 25 - 27 % agreement rate.

With regard to student-participation, 89% of UG Students and 76% of PG Students reported that 'I enjoy sharing my views with the tutor and fellow students', whereas, the Tutors may have contrasting views, around 25%.

The group learning activities/group work is encouraged by 82% of Adviser/Supervisor and 100% of Module Tutor in WBL, and over 76% of Students enjoyed group learning. The findings aligned with Tang's (1997) view that Chinese learners enjoyed group learning.

More than 65% of UG and 88% of PG Students agreed that they would openly participate in the discussions when not called on by the teacher; whereas, only 64% of Adviser/Supervisor and 50% of Module Tutor think the Students were active in class participation.

As Sit (2013) suggested, a passive learning style is one of the three major learning styles of the Chinese learners in which they sit quietly and act as a receiver of knowledge until being asked by the teacher to respond. The findings show that most of the students; i.e. 35% of UG and 18% of PG students learned passively. However, the figures for the Tutors were not of similar range, around 35% of Adviser/Supervisor and 50% of Module Tutors thought that the Students were not actively learning in class/project discussion.

It is a characteristic of Chinese learners not to raise questions in the classroom and challenge the teacher or other students (Chan, 1999). However, the findings show a relatively high agreement rate on challenging other's views during the discussion for the PG students (71%) and a comparatively lower agreement for the UG students (37%). Close to half (46%) of the Adviser/Supervisor and three-quarters of the Module Tutors (75%) encourage the students to challenge other's views during the class/project discussion because they understand that WBL is for the working adult, and discussion and debate are suitable learning approach.

Table 4.23 Views on Involving and Using the WBL Students' Experience in Teaching and Learning Activities

	Adviser/Supervisor			**Module Tutor**		
	Agreed	**Neutral**	**Disagreed**	**Agreed**	**Neutral**	**Disagreed**
I encourage WBL student use their work experience to form an important part of their	90.91%	9.09%	0.00%	75.00%	25.00%	0.00%

studies						
I use the WBL students' experience to illustrate learning	63.64%	27.27%	9.09%	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%
As a WBL tutor, I involved my students in planning their programme of studies and research	63.64%	18.18%	9.09%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Table 4.23 presents the adoption of the adult learning approach of the Tutors for adult learners. 91% of Adviser/Supervisor and 75% of Module Tutor agreed with 'encourage WBL students to use their work experience to form an important part of their studies' which will enhance the authenticity of the learning activities and learning outcomes (Knowles 1985). However, about 63% of Adviser/Supervisor and 50% of Module Tutor chose: 'I use the WBL students' experience to illustrate learning', which means that the Adviser/Supervisor and Module Tutor, in general, need to improve their adult learning approaches and teaching practices. Also, 100% of Module Tutors agreed with 'As a WBL tutor, I involved my students in planning their programme of studies and research'.

Figure 4.24-2

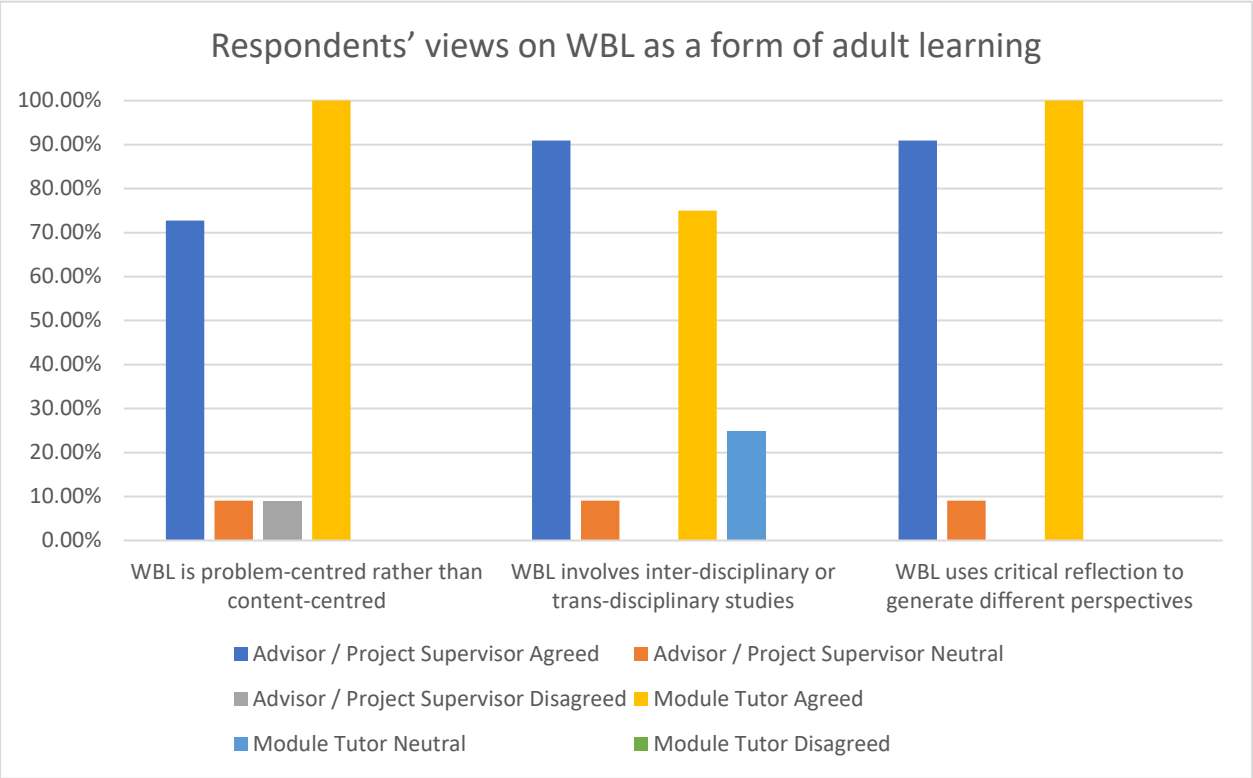


Figure 4.24-2 indicates that both Adviser/Supervisor and Module Tutor had high rates of agreement on the WBL programme's characteristics. More than 70% of Adviser/Supervisor and 100% Module Tutor agreed that 'WBL is problem-centred rather than content-centred'; more than 90% of Adviser/Supervisor and 75% Module Tutor agreed that 'WBL involves inter-disciplinary or trans-disciplinary studies'; and more than 90% of Adviser/Supervisor and 100% Module Tutor agreed that 'WBL uses critical reflection to generate different perspectives'. These findings reflect the views stated by Gibbons *et al.*, (1994) on Mode 2 knowledge.

Figure 4.26

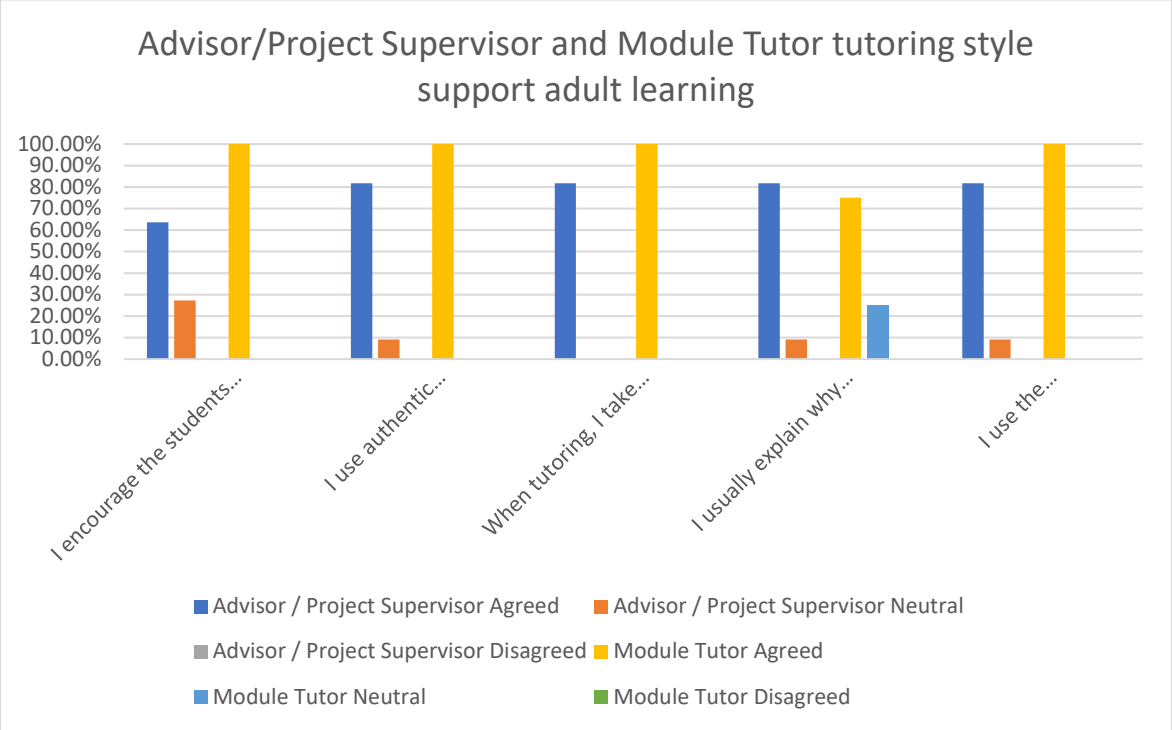


Figure 4.26 confirms that both the Adviser/Supervisor and Module Tutor understand WBL as a form of adult learning, and applied adult learning principles (Knowles 1985) in their tutoring style to support the WBL students' adult learning style. They had high agreement rates on the following items in relation to the adult learning characteristics:

First- 65% of Adviser/Supervisor and 100% of Module Tutor agreed with 'encourage the students to adopt a self-discovery approach in exploring their WBL', using a 'constructivist' approach in learning and teaching.

Second- 82% of Adviser/Supervisor and 100% of Module Tutor agreed with 'use authentic workplace tasks in the instruction process', making the learning and teaching more relevant and practical.

Third- 82% of Adviser/Supervisor and 100% of Module Tutor agreed with 'take into account different work/learning backgrounds of individual learners', paying attention to the diversity and different learning needs of the professional practitioners.

Fourth- 82% of Advisor/Supervisor and 76% of Module Tutor agreed with 'explain why specific things are being presented in particular ways', showing that knowledge and practices are context-based.

Fifth- 82% of Advisor/Supervisor and 100% of Module Tutor agreed with ‘use the industry/professional contexts to elaborate student’s learning’, benchmarking knowledge and practices to the industry/professional standards.

Distance Learning

WBL can be delivered in a distance learning mode with related support for the learners.

Figure 4.19

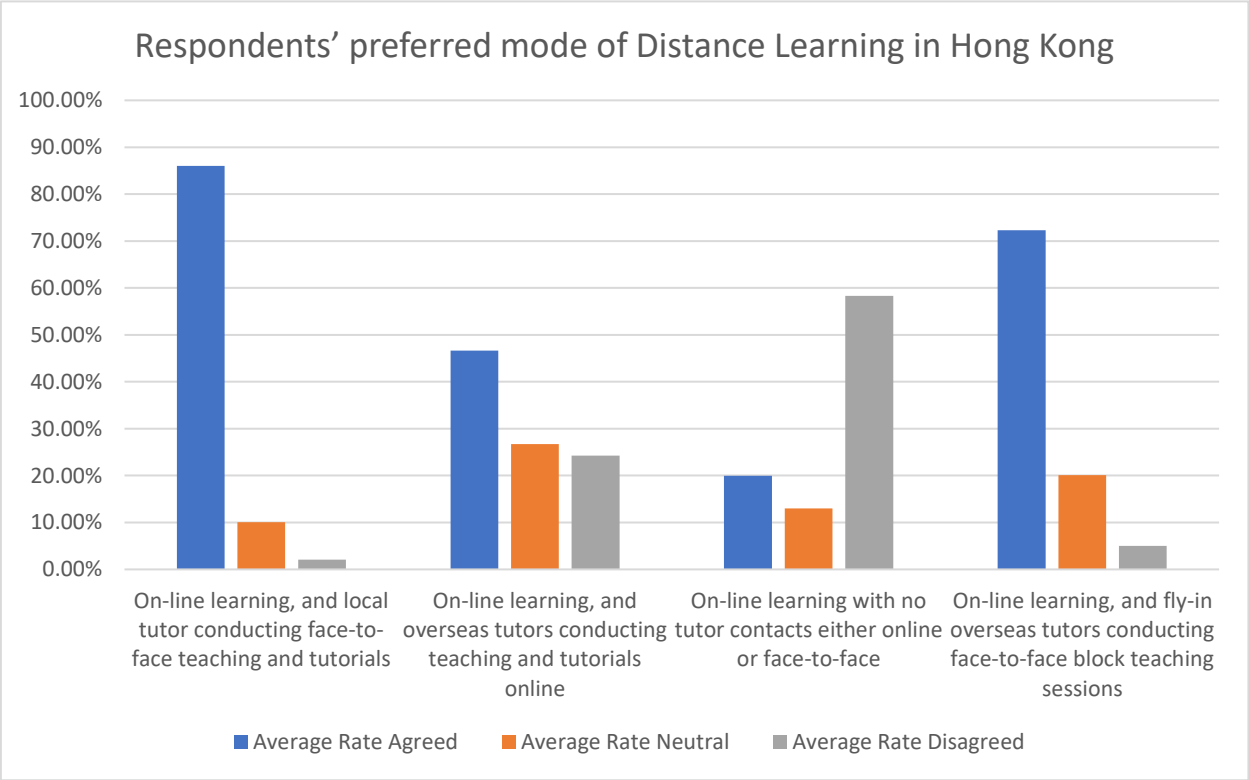
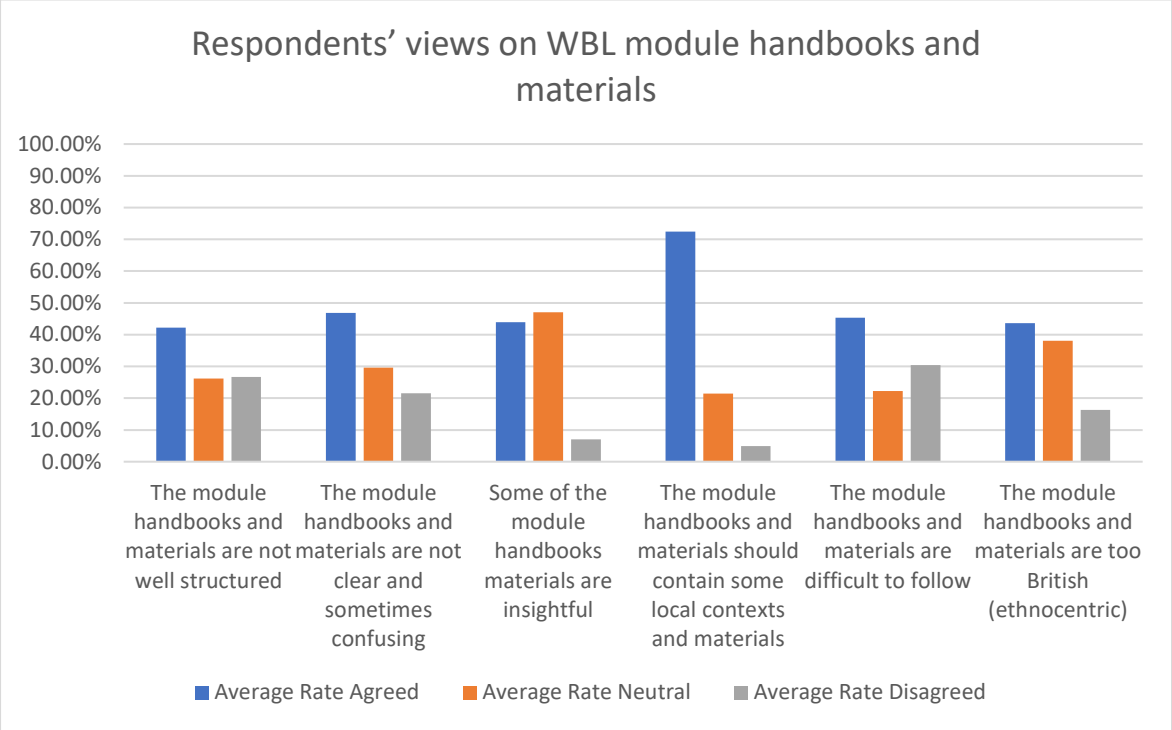


Figure 4.19 displays the respondents’ two most preferred modes of distance learning in HK, which are ‘Online learning, and local tutor conducting face-to-face teaching and tutorials (88% agreed), and “On-line learning, and fly-in overseas tutors conducting face-to-face block teaching sessions’ (75% agreed). The findings align with the views expressed by Cribbin (2002).

Figure 4.20



According to Gosling (2003), effective learning support services are important to meet the students' learning needs; therefore, learning resources such as a good quality module handbook is useful. Figure 4.20 shows that 42% of respondents agree that the module handbook materials are not well-structured; 47% of respondents think that module handbooks and materials are confusing and not clear ; less than half the respondents (44%) thought that the module handbook materials are insightful; 72% of respondents agree that the module handbook and materials should contain some local contexts and materials; 45% of respondents find the module handbook and material difficult to follow; and 44% of respondents regard the module handbooks and materials are too British (ethnocentric). The most significant result seems to concern the lack of local contexts and materials in the module handbooks. This is an area that could be addressed by having HK staff adapt module handbooks to the HK setting.

Table 4.21 Communications between Students and Tutor

Statements for UG and PG Students	UG Students	PG Students	Statements for Adviser/ Supervisor and Module Tutor	Adviser/ Supervisor	Module Tutor
The feedback provided is helpful and easily understood	82.61%	82.35%	The students found my feedback helpful and easily understood	100.00%	100.00%
My tutor is difficult to get hold of	17.39%	8.82%	My students are difficult to get hold of	45.45%	25.00%
There was an established communication channel between the tutor and myself	82.61%	76.47%	There was an established communication channel between the students and myself	72.73%	100.00%
There was timely feedback on draft assignments	67.39%	70.59%	They hardly submit any draft assignments on time for comments	63.64%	75.00%

Table 4.21 presents the communications between Students and Tutors, whereas an overwhelmingly 82% Students and 100% of Tutors agreed that 'The feedback provides are helpful and easily understand'; and nearly three-fourth of Students and Tutors (ranging from 73% - 100%) agreed that 'There was an established communication channel between the tutor and students'. Around 70% of Students (67% for UG and 71% for PG students) agreed

that ‘There is timely feedback on draft assignment’. However, close to 65% of Adviser/Supervisor and 75% Module Tutor found that: ’They (the Students) hardly submit any draft assignment on time for comments’.

Student feedback is an important form of learning support (Gosling 2003), which is another key characteristic of WBL programmes, where students submit draft coursework and proposals for formative feedback and then can not only learn from the feedback but can gain confidence in their changing style of engagement. Generally, students seem to be satisfied in this important area though perhaps clearer deadlines for feedback need to be enforced.

Figure 4.22

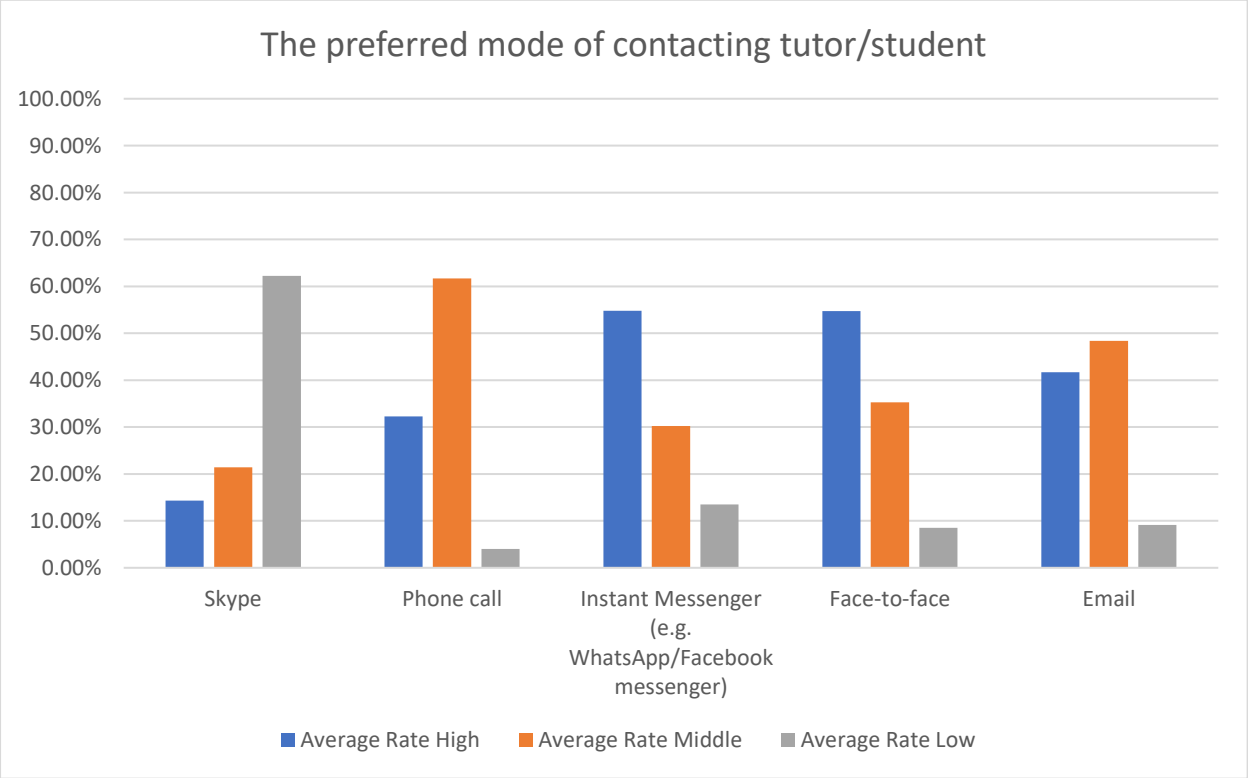


Figure 4.22 displays the preferred mode of contacting tutor/student. The collected responses showed that contacting methods of ‘Phone call’ (92%), ‘Face-to-face’ (90%) and ‘Email’ (90%) were comparatively highly preferred modes of contact, which shows that students seem to favour the traditional methods of contacting. However, social media, ‘Instant Messenger’ (85%) shows to be a popular and growing method for contacting. Other online methods of “Skype” received a relatively lower rating (36%) for contacting.

Figure 4.27

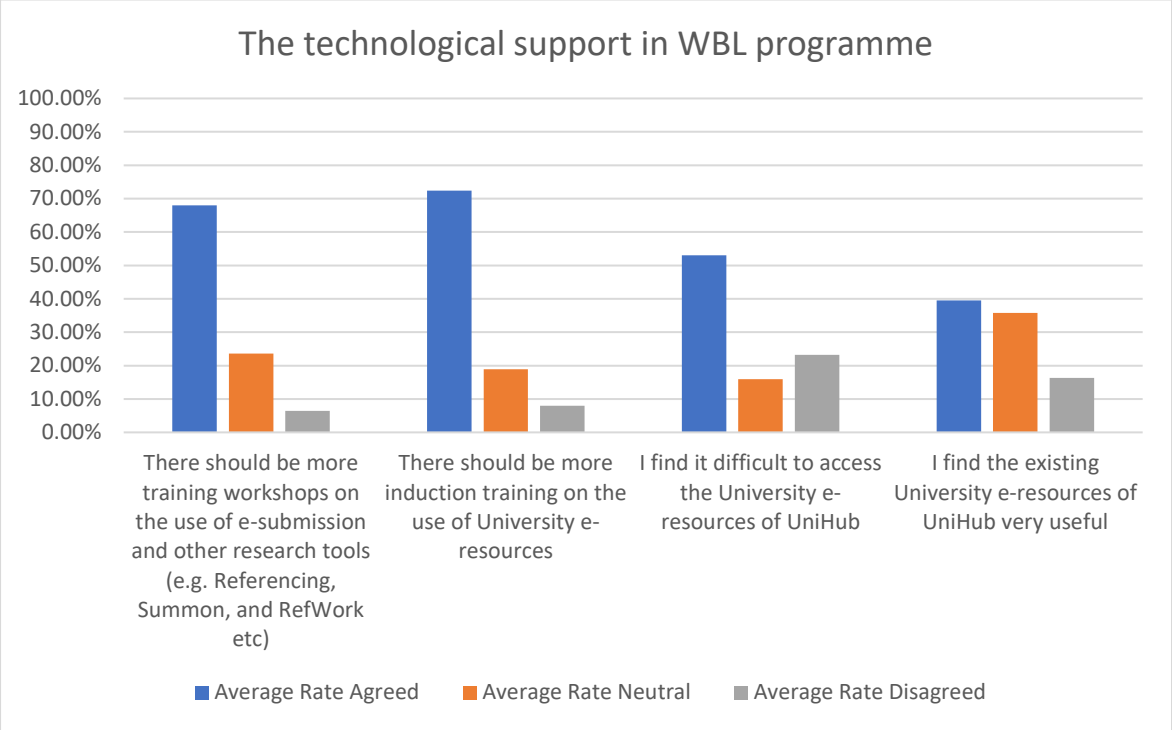
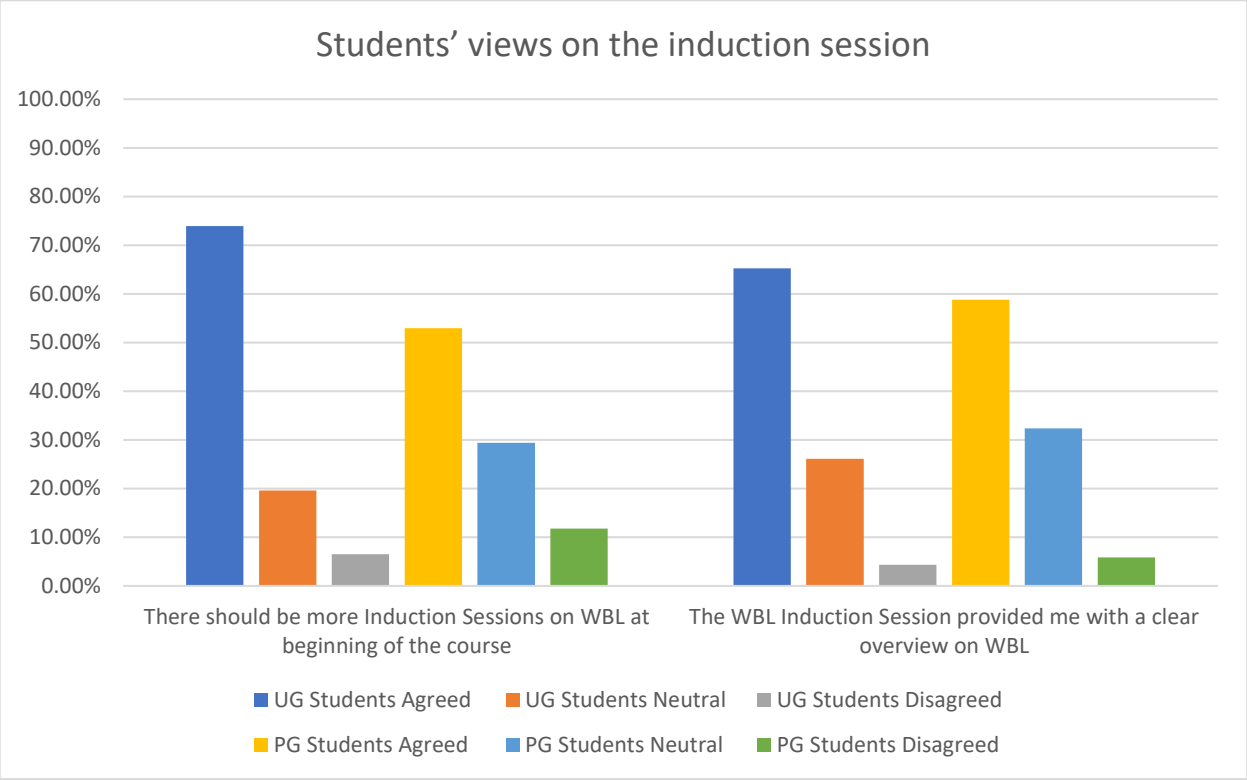


Figure 4.27 shows that 68% and 74% of the Students think that there should be more training sessions on UniHub tools and induction training on the use of the University's e-resources, respectively. More than half of respondents (56%) found it difficult to access the University's UniHub tools and e-resources.

Learning Support

Figure 4.28



According to the QAA report (2017), induction is an important part of the learning support. Figure 4.28 shows that 74% of UG Students and 53% of PG Students agreed that 'There should be more induction sessions at beginning of programme'; and 65% of UG Students and 59% of PG Students agreed that 'The WBL Induction Session provided me with a clear overview on WBL'.

Figure 4.29

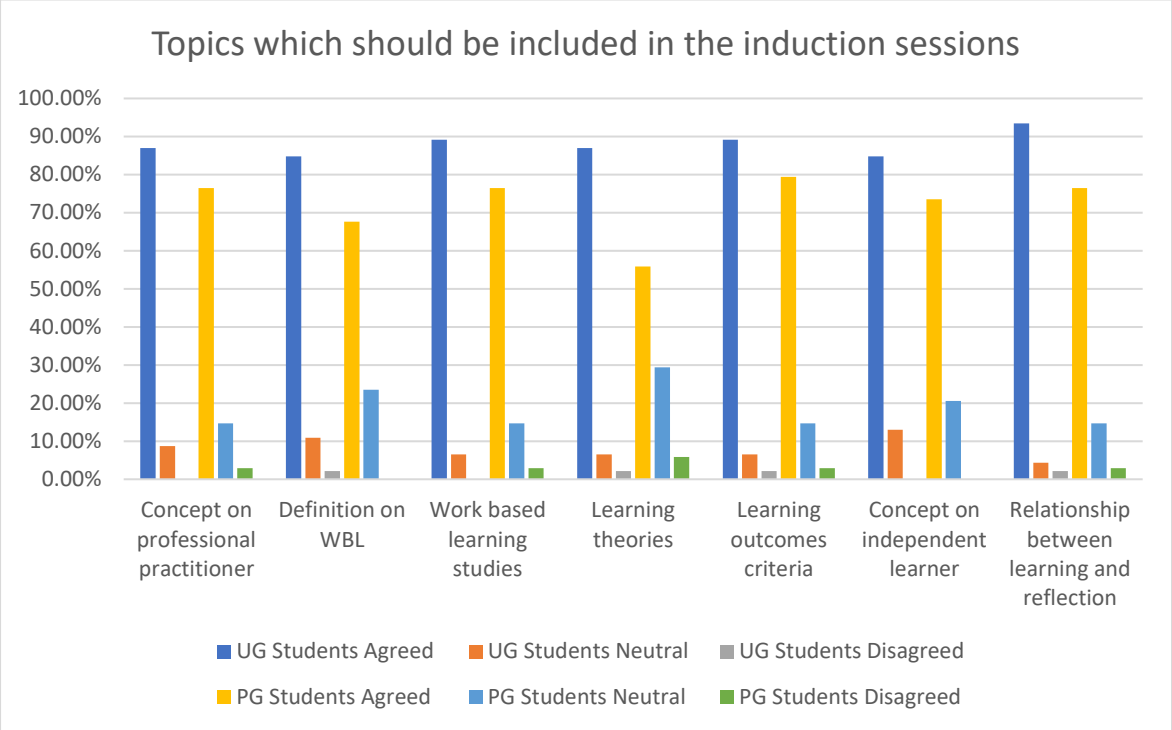
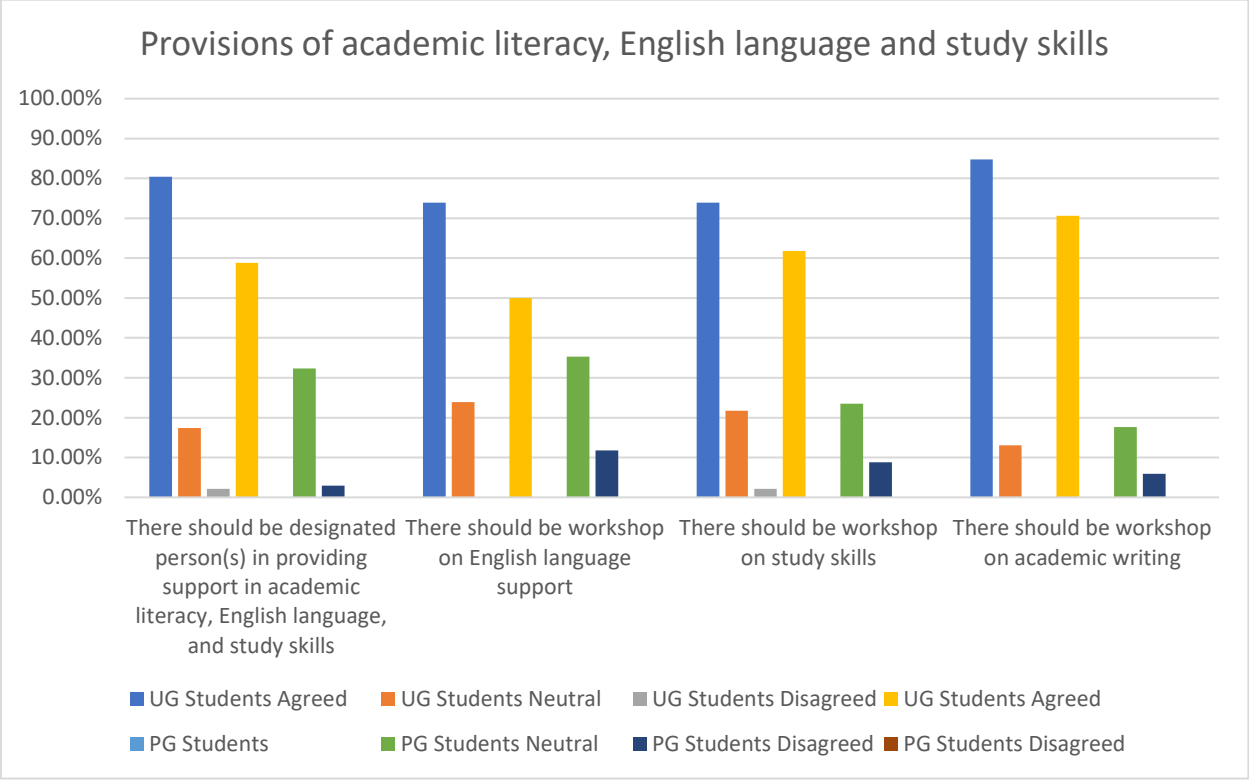


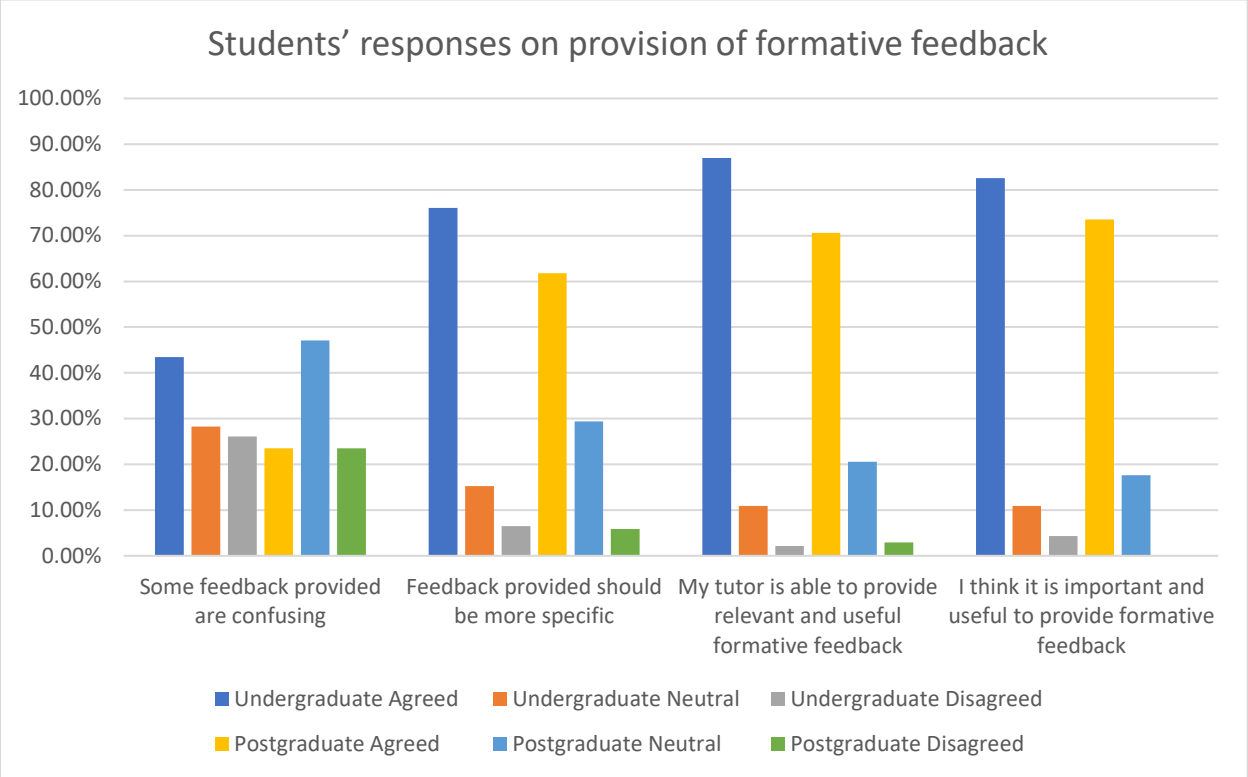
Figure 4.29 shows that there is a high percentage of agreement of the UG Students on all the topics which should be included in the induction session (ranging from 85% to 94%). These include topics such as 'Concept on professional practitioner', 'Work-based learning studies', Learning outcome criteria', 'Concept on independent learner, and 'Relationship between learning and reflection'. However, the PG Students have a relatively lower percentage of agreement on these topics (ranging from 75% to 79%), and a medium percentage of agreement on 'Definition of WBL' (68%) and 'Learning theories' (56%). These results seem to indicate that students – particularly undergraduate students – would favour a more thorough induction with more information in all areas.

Figure 4.30



The provision of support in academic literacy, English language, and study skills is part of learning support (Gosling 2003). Figure 4.30 shows that the UG Students agreed with those provisions (ranging from 74% to 85%), whereas, the PG Students had relatively lower agreement rates on the provisions, except on Academic English (71%). In fact, the HKWBLC does not provide regular workshops on Academic English support, the rating figures call for the provision of regular workshops on Academic English.

Figure 4.31



Regarding the provision of formative feedback, the collected responses showed that formative feedback provided was agreed by both UG and PG students as important and useful. Figure 4.31 shows that both UG Students (83%) and PG Students (74%) agreed that 'I think it is important and useful to provide formative feedback'. And 87% of UG Students and 71% of PG Students agreed that 'My tutor is able to provide relevant and useful formative feedback.

Figure 4.32

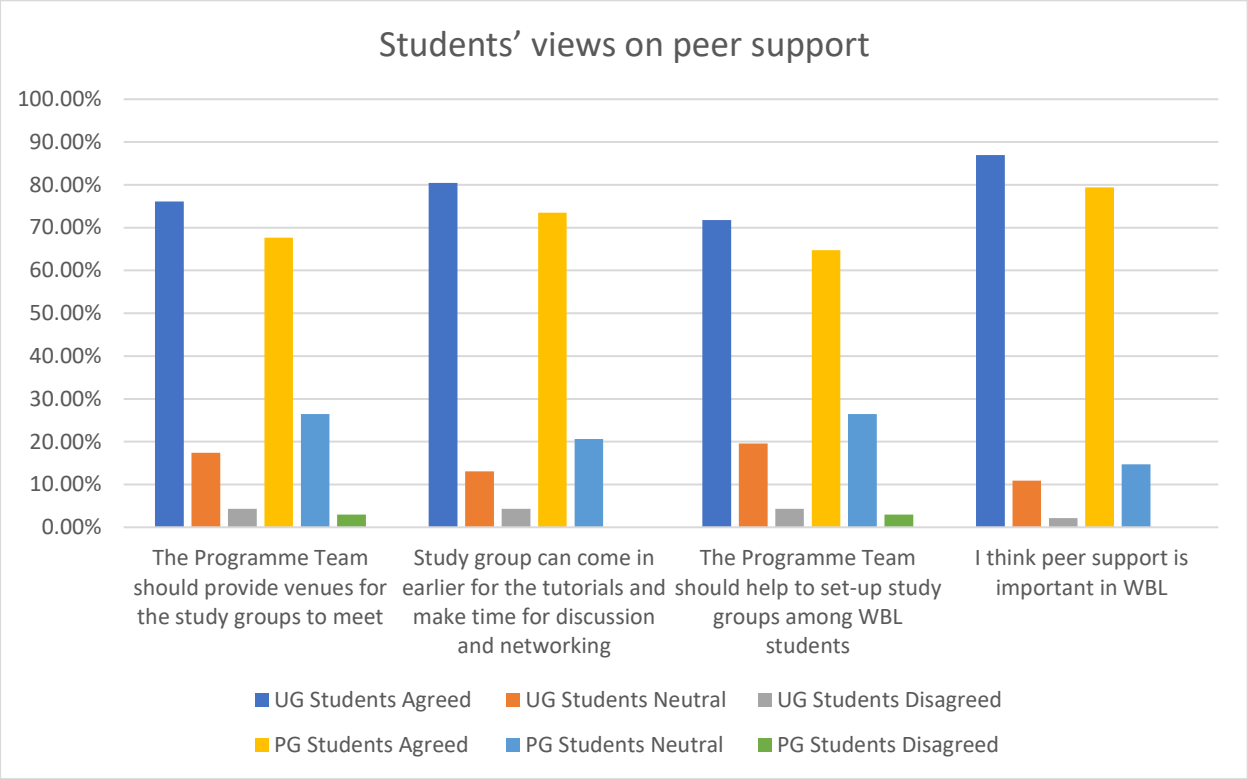
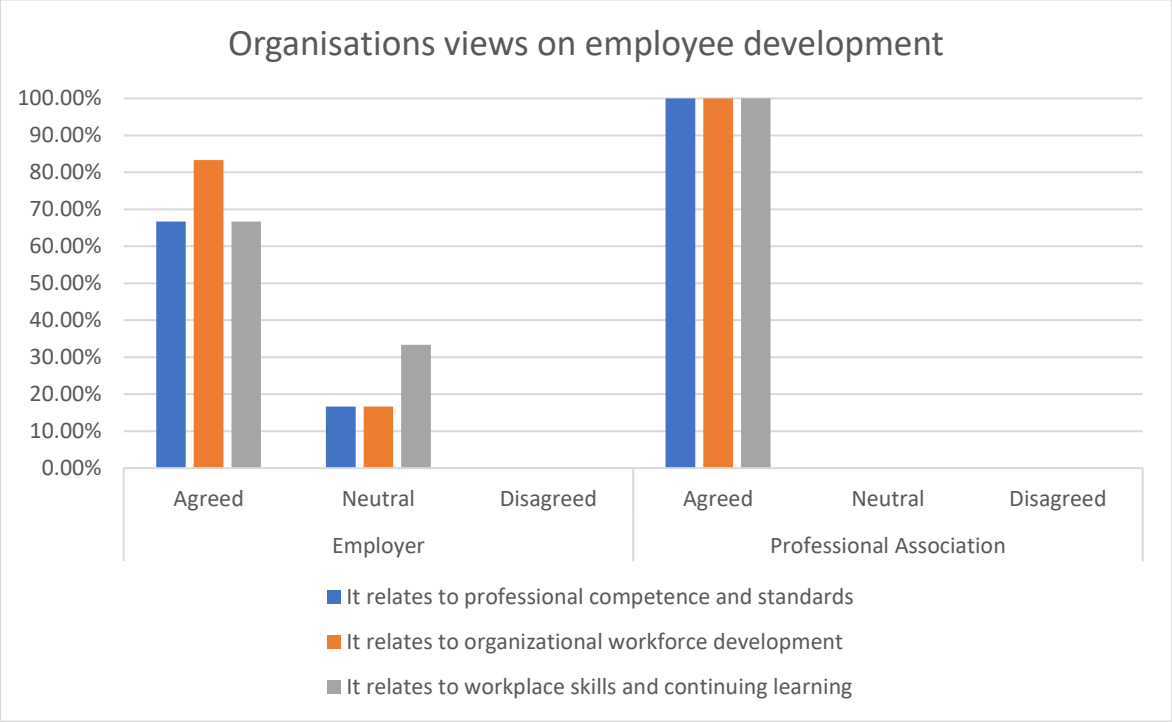


Figure 4.32 shows that both UG Students (87%) and PG Students (79%) agreed that 'I think peer support is important in WBL'. Most of them agreed that the Centre should provide help to the set-up of the peer study group (68%) and the venue for the meeting (72%), and allocate time for peer discussion (77%).

Incorporating WBL into Employee Development/CPD

Figure 4.34



This question is for organisations only. Figure 4.34 shows that the Professional Associations were 100% agreed on incorporating WBL in employee development as it relates to professional competence and standard, organisational workforce development, and workplace skills and continuing development. The Employers also have a high agreement rate on incorporating WBL in employee development as it relates to the professional competence and standard (67%), organisational workforce development (83%), and workplace skills and continuing development (67%). There was no open comment collected under this question in the employers and professional associations questionnaires.

Table 4.38 Organisation's Views on Employee/Members' Learning and Development

	Employer			Professional Association		
	Agreed	Neutral	Disagreed	Agreed	Neutral	Disagreed
We value practitioner knowledge	83.33%	16.67%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
We have a clear employee/member learning & development plan	83.33%	0.00%	16.67%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
We encourage employees/members to learn somethings positive from their mistakes	66.67%	33.33%	0.00%	33.33%	50.00%	16.67%
We reward professional performance	83.33%	16.67%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
We value employees/members acquiring and applying new learning	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
We equate employees'/members' achievement with how much they learn	33.33%	50.00%	16.67%	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%

Figure 4.38 shows that the Professional Associations were 100% agreed on valuing practitioner knowledge and so was a very high percentage of Employers (83%). Similarly, both types of organisations have the same high agreement rate on having a clear employee/member learning and development plan. Regarding learning something positive from mistakes, the Professional Associations have a low agreement rate of 33%, a medium neutral rate of 50%, and a low disagreement rate of 17%. Professional performance is highly regarded and rewarded by Professional Associations and Employers, which was 100% for the former, and 83% for the latter. On the topic of valuing employees/members acquiring and applying new learning, both types of organisations were in 100% agreement. However, the results for equating employees/members' achievement with how much they learn were diverse; with a low agreement rate for the Employers (33%), and a medium agreement rate

for Professional Associations (50%).

Summarised Key Points Emerged from the Closed Questionnaire Items

The closed questionnaire items mainly relate to gathering the perspectives from the Students, Tutors, and Organisations on analysing major differences between the teaching and learning styles of WBL and the traditional formal education programme, exploring if WBL is a suitable learning approach for HK and identifying appropriate WBL pedagogical practice enhancements. The following are the key points that emerged from the data.

(1) The importance and impact of WBL

WBL is impactful on the professional practitioners and the organisation (Lester and Costley, 2010). The data shows that WBL can help to develop some important workplace skills and develop people with employability, characteristics that aligned with the WBL programme's learning outcomes.

(2) Learning needs of professional practitioners

WBL learners' learning needs mainly related to continuing development and career development, which is WBL's core concept of continuous improvement. This seems to align with Brenan's (2005) observation that WBL learners' learning needs are diverse but mainly related to continuing development.

(3) WBL experience

WBL has several unique features that differentiate it from the traditional classroom education programme. It is characterised by its learner-centred and reflection on practice approach (European Training Foundation, 2013); and the learners enjoy the benefits of its provision of professional education opportunity, accreditation of prior learning, ability to manage one's own learning, and find it an enjoyable learning process.

(4) Cultural differences in teaching and learning

The data reveals that the issues of cultural differences in teaching and learning are not as substantial as expected. Nearly all tutors adopt the facilitative teaching style (Roger 1969) in discussions, encourage the students to share their views, institute group tasks, and take an active role (Ramsden 1992) in teaching and learning. On the other hand, the HK students are

not fully ‘teacher-dependent’ as Chan (1999) suggested. The relative figure was 85% and 56% for UG and PG respectively, and around 50% of UG Students and 76% of PG Students have discussions and debate with their tutors. The tutors are fully aware that WBL is a form of adult learning and adopt related adult learning principles (Knowles 1985) and appropriate facilitative teaching style (Roger 1969) in the WBL teaching and learning processes.

(5) Distance learning

WBL programme may be regarded as a distance learning programme, and there are preferred modes of distance learning for the HK students as suggested by Cribbin (2002). Most of the students find the module handbook problematic and requiring improvements. There are established channels for communications between the students and the tutors, and two-thirds of tutor complaints were about students not submitting draft coursework in time for comments. The most common preferred mode of communication between students and tutors are phone-call, face to face meeting, email, and instant messenger. Most respondents find it difficult to use technological online support. In short, there are some related support difficulties of the distance learning mode of WBL that need to be overcome.

(6) Learning support

WBL as a form of distance and adult learning, which usually requires extensive learning support. The learners think that there should be more induction on WBL and workshop on e-resource and support on literacy, English language, and study skills; and the formative feedback and peer support are useful (Gosling 2003).

(7) Incorporating WBL into employee development/CPD

All Employers and Professional Associations have clear development plans for their employees/members and will consider incorporating WBL into employee development/CPD initiatives. They also have a high agreement rate on valuing practitioner knowledge, professional performance, and their employee's/members’ acquisition and application of new learning.

Distilling Key Points from Open-ended Questionnaires

The open-ended questionnaire items mainly relate to 'enhancements' issues, and views collected from the Students, Tutors, and Organisations on possible enhancements appear in the following three major areas:

- How to improve learning thorough WBL?
- How to make the WBL programme more culturally relevant in the HK context?
- How to enhance learning support?

There are many open comments from the respondents, which are summarised in the following Appendices:

- Appendix 4.2.3 A - Suggestions on how to improve learning through WBL
- Appendix 4.2.3 B - Suggestions for WBL programme to be more culturally relevant
- Appendix 4.2.3 C - Suggestions on how to enhance learning support for WBL students

After reviewing the above Appendices, the respondents' key comments can be grouped into four areas for presentation and analyses: recognition and promotion; teaching and learning, support; and others.

(1) Recognition and Promotion

The respondents report that not many people understand or are aware of the key concepts and values of the WBL programme. To make WBL more relevant to the HK context, the students suggest creating awareness among the major stakeholders on the values of informal learning at the workplace to get the stakeholders' recognition; promoting the concepts and process of WBL and its benefits and emphasising its importance in professional development. The tutors agree that recognition and promotion are required for the understanding of WBL concepts and academic requirements to attract potential students. Also, it is important to raise industry awareness to obtain scholarships and de-emphasise knowledge acquisition in favour of learning. The students and tutors suggest that the University needs to promote the WBL programme to the industry, government, and professional associations, outlining WBL's benefits and effectiveness; and obtaining accreditation from the government and professional associations for recognition. The organisations suggest showcasing WBL graduates to professional practitioners, and to their employers.

(2) Teaching and Learning

There are several suggestions for improving the teaching and learning of WBL. The students suggest providing more subject-related input, additional teaching on quantitative and qualitative research methods; using group projects to enhance peer learning (Tang, 1999); sharing of experiences from former and current students on WBL processes, assessments comments, company visits and online teaching materials. Regarding making WBL more culturally relevant, the students suggest sharing learning from fellow students, alumni, industry speakers, and learning communities. The tutors hold similar views on experience sharing through discussions among students, case studies and presentations by industry experts and speakers, and arranging field trips for students. The organisations also suggest holding regular experience sharing sessions.

According to the students, authenticity (Knowles 1985) is an important element in teaching culturally relevant WBL. These include discussions of local business cases, introducing some culturally related subject topic(s), for example, coaching in Chinese/Asian culture, and customisation of learning topics to the specific industry field or workplace. The tutors suggest asking students to research their industry or disciplines, doing a SWOT analysis on their own organisation, and delivering a contextualised course that encourages students to connect theories to practices, which is in line with the adult learning approach and WBL teaching and learning.

(3) Learning Support

The students state that to make the learning experience smooth and enjoyable, it is important to have the support of the tutors and classmates, and the best way to improve learning experience is to form a learning community. On the other hand, the tutors suggest enhancing the students' communication skills in written and spoken English and critical thinking ability. Regarding making WBL more culturally relevant, the students suggest assigning a tutor to a small group of students who require special assistance in WBL, providing better tutorial times for project consultations, offering more online resources such as narrative video and professional knowledge and skills on related subjects, making the online resources more user-friendly, better flexibility for extending assignment submission, and offering more sample work for students' reference. The suggestions on enhancing support come from students only and mainly focuses on the use of the online platform and social media to provide support for

students. These include creating a common data environment (e.g. Facebook) for students to discuss, setting up chat groups for students' queries, using the online platform to download resources and teaching materials, and adopting mobile learning tools like 'WhatsApp'. The other support relates to improving access to tutors, more engagement from tutors, and tutors having the educational philosophy of a helping professional. The students think that peer support is important in WBL and there should be more venues for discussions and more books and technical papers that are not always available from the university's e-resources.

(4) Others

The students are concerned about the tutors' quality in making the WBL culturally relevant in the HK context. The students suggest that there should be faculty staff conducting the workshops. The WBL tutors should come from local practice, possessing workplace knowledge and practices, understanding the HK workplace and job market, sharing local cases and professional knowledge to suit the needs of the students. In addition, the students suggest the use of bilingual discussions of local cases or adopting the Chinese (Cantonese) language as a medium of instruction when English is a barrier for some of the HK students. The tutors also echo the views that tutors should have relevant teaching qualifications and real business operation experience; the tutors agree on engaging students more on critical analyses and improving their English competency to comprehend the English lectures; however, students may use the Chinese language (i.e. Cantonese, the local dialect) to discuss to help their understanding of the topic.

The respondents have put forward many suggestions in the open-ended questions in the questionnaire which indicate that they want to have a voice in enhancing their WBL, making it more culturally and contextually relevant to provide enhanced learning and support in their WBL journey.

Interview Presentation and Analyses

The interviews were developed after a careful initial literature review, discussions with colleagues, further literature review, and advice from my supervisory team. The interviews were developed to supplement the lack of 'depth' of the questionnaires. Interviews were used to elicit in-depth responses from the interviewees on their perceptions, thinking, feelings, and

experience of the WBL programme in HK. With the support of NVivo, the interview data were grouped into a constructed perspective against the three research objectives. There are some dominant and subordinate key points that emerge from the interview data. Please refer to Appendix 4.3.2 - NVivo Presentation on Nodes and Sub-Nodes. The data presentations and analyses are in Appendix 4.3.3 Interview Data. In this section, I shall present and analyse the extracts of two sets of interview data; the first set relates to the key points of interview data that are in relation to their weighting of impact, and the second set relates to the distilled key points in relation to the three major research objectives.

Interviews Conducted and Profiles of Respondents

I conducted three sets of interviews with the students, tutors, and organisations. Some common interview questions were asked for all three groups of respondents, and there were some specific interview questions for each group of respondents. For instance, teaching and learning practices for WBL programmes in HK for the tutors. Please refer to Appendix 3.4 - Interview Question Items for the respective interview questions of students, tutors, and organisations. I have conducted the following purposeful interviews:

Number	Group	Type of interview	Interview labels
6	Students	3 Undergraduate	UG1, UG2, UG3
		3 Postgraduate	PG1, PG2, PG3
4	Tutors	4 Module Tutors	T1, T2, T3, T4
4	Organisations	2 Employers	E1, E2
		2 Professional Associations	P1, P2

For brief profiles of the interviewees, please refer to Appendix 4.3.1

The interviews used a semi-structured format, allowing the respondents to offer views of their experience of the WBL programme in HK. The interviews were conducted in a private place and recorded with the respondents' knowledge and consent. The recorded interview data were then transcribed into typed text for presentation and analysis. With the support of

NVivo, the interview data were categorised into the three major research objectives, using thematic analysis, the data were closely examined and reviewed, and the dominant and subordinate key points were then distilled.

Tabulation of Key Points for Interview Data (Students and Tutors) in Relation to Weighting of its Impact to the HK WBL Programme

In general, there are two ways of deciding the criteria for weighting; first, frequency; and second, intensity, which includes impact. NVivo provides the frequency of nodes and sub-nodes of interview data, which show how many people mention certain items; however, this may or may not be impactful. It seems relevant and appropriate to define what is meant by impactful. In this instance, I am defining the term 'impact' as: 'negative impact on successful progression and fulfilling of the learning outcomes of the WBL (HK) programme, making people a better professional practitioner'. There are three types of 'impact' in the tabulation of presentation and analyses:

(a) 'High' - the critical impact that inhibits the students from successful progression and fulfilling of the learning outcomes of the programme

(b) 'Medium' - the moderate impact that inhibits the students from successful progression and fulfilling of the learning outcomes of the programme

(c) 'Others' - surprising key findings, which may represent tensions

Below Table 4.3.2 tabulates the key distillations of different kinds of impact and my comments on its relevance to the WBL programmes in HK.

Table 4.3.2 Key Points from the Interview Data and My Comments on its Relevance to the WBL Programme in HK

High Impact		
Key distillations	*Representative quotes*	*My learning on the comments and its relevance to the WBL programme in HK*
Understanding and recognising the differences	(1) Recognition of knowledge "The WBL programme recognises, I think, the work… They recognise their knowledge within their job. And, it facilitates the students to look into their practice to really reflect on their work. And I think that's the good point because it recognises the experience, the knowledge, and the skills that somebody acquires at work". (T2)	WBL is Mode 2 knowledge (Gibbon et al. 1994). It recognises that knowledge is out there and embedded within the practice of the professional practitioners; whereby the learner becomes a researching professional, who can investigate their practices proactively, and undertake work-based research to enhance practices; i.e. creating knowledge. The conception that WBL is a mode of knowledge should be clearly elaborated to the students for them to recognised.
	(2) Teaching styles "They are not used to it. I'm not sure the UK students are either, to be honest with you. Perhaps Hong Kong students aren't so open to it because it's not a natural part of their upbringing. The culture and	WBL programme differs from traditional programmes and is being transferred from the UK to the HK context. There may be some cultural differences in the teaching and learning of WBL

	what's happened in school is all sort of one-way, they are not encouraged to express themselves." (T3)	programmes. (Boud 1996; Boud, David, Soloman & Nicky, 2001); (MacLean, MacIntosh & Grant, 2002) The HK style of teaching is mostly one-way as mentioned by some of the tutors, and HK students are used to a didactic teaching style (Chan 1999) and expected the teacher to transfer knowledge to them, placing the teacher in a leading role in the teaching and learning process.
Teaching and learning of WBL	(1) "WBL is individually-centred, the more efforts I put in, the more I will get out of it. It is through continuous reflective learning that I can bring out the best of my potentials… In WBL, it emphasises on reflection". (UG2)	The WBL programme studies one's professional practice through reflection, which follows the concept of continuous improvements in practice and brings out the best potentials of professional practitioners. The WBL programme uses Schon's (1983) concept of 'reflective practitioner' to enhance practices and performance.
	(2) Teaching practices "I think the rationale needs to be participatory, because what we are	It seems that all the module tutors aware that the WBL teaching and learning process

	trying to do is focus on the individual students, so whatever strategies are used in terms of encouraging them to learn, it has to be focused on them and getting them to be able to understand how they fit the theory to their own work experiences. Therefore, they need to be able to connect their work experience with the theory that is being taught or delivered." (T3)	involves the partitions of the students to be effective. This aligns with Ramsden's (1992) idea that participatory teaching and learning processes with the use of discussions and guidance is more effective.
Tutor quality and support	(1) Tutor quality "The tutors share their professional experience with us, and encourage the students to have discussions… The tutor uses our work practice and problems to illustrate the teaching and learning. It is result-oriented which would give solutions to our working problems." (UG3)	WBL is practice-based, which is aligned with Caffarella & Barnett's (1994) suggestion. This means that the tutors need to have sufficient industry experience and be able to relate practices to theories, facilitating discussion on solving workplace issues.
	(2) Support "And then there were supervisors for us so that we can ask him or her anytime we want, so it is very useful when doing our assignments… We can contact through email, and through telephone and through face to face,	Tutor support is important in the WBL teaching and learning process, the (adult) work-based learners usually require a higher level of support from tutors as they have not been studying for a while, which echoed

	and then whenever I need I just call or email my supervisor and then he will teach me and give some comments, feedback related to our assignments, paper or the final coursework". (UG1)	Gosling's (2003) suggestion in providing learning support to learners.
Medium Impact		
Key distillations	*Representative quotes*	*My learning on the comments and its relevance to the WBL programme in HK*
Flexibility and inclusiveness of WBL programme	(1) Flexibility "You have to make it your own effort more in the WBL programme, but that will give you a more flexibility and then you can have more creative and then if you put more effort you can learn a broader knowledge… But in WBL there was no syllabus, so you cannot ask everything you want so easy, so it's a broader way to learn more knowledge or deepen the knowledge." (UG1)	WBL studies the work roles and practices of the professional practitioner; hence, no fixed syllabus. The focus is on the learner's continuing wider and relevant professional development, using the learner as an object of study. However, this may mean that the student needs to study more than a fixed syllabus, which is aligned with Boud's (1996) observations.
	(2) Inclusiveness "Now, the other advantage is that I've noticed that some of the students have not been able to get into our traditional academic programme… I mean it's more	The WBL programme is inclusive and provides continuous learning and development for the working adult, enabling them to recognise the knowledge and

	grassroots type of thing. It's not the elitist type of thing. If you look at other universities, the traditional universities is that they would only take the cream of the crops. You got good marks, then they will take you". (T2)	skills that they gained from the workplace and admitting them to continuing HE and professional development. This echos Boud's (1996) and Brenan's (2005) statements regarding WBL's characteristics.
Learning needs and approaches of professional practitioners	(1) Verification and accreditation of prior learning "So, I think the WBL programme can help me to re-organise all my skills, knowledge in the training field…I want to facilitate all my skills and knowledge in my workplace, to consolidate, so that I can have a better performance" (PG3)	The WBL programme values professional learning and provides an opportunity for the students to review, reflect, consolidate and enhance their professional practices, plus enable them to prepare an APEL credit claim for entrance to higher education in an effective and practical way as stated in the MU's curriculum presented by Costley & Dikerdam (2011)
	(2) Adult learning approaches "The tutors share their professional experience with us and encourage the students to have discussion… the tutors use our work practices and problems to illustrate the teaching and learning. It is result-oriented which would give the solutions to our working	WBL is targeted for working adults, which is a form of adult learning that provides freedom and flexibility to the learners. It requires self-initiative from the learners and support from tutors and peers to sustain the solitary learning journey. The

	problems". (UG3)	learning approach is interactive, and the teaching style is facilitative, using the teaching practices of discussions and sharing of experiences that encourage group learning and peer learning. Adult learners prefer interactive, authentic and practical learning environments. This reflects Knowles' (1985) concepts on adult learning.
Challenges and learning support	(1) Time management and self-discipline "… so, they need to have a very good time management to balance their work, and then, the school work…WBL programme has to have a good self-discipline… they need to proactively to learning." (UG1)	Professional practitioners joining the WBL programme of studies, are faced with the challenges of balancing full-time work and part-time study and this requires self-disciplines for self-directed learning. Time management and self-discipline are critical success factors for working adults pursuing part-time independent studies as indicated by Higher Education Academy (2017)
	(2) Learning support "… I would like to mention two points I think can really help WBL	The provisions of Study Skills are important components of the HE and

	students. The first is tell us how to find relevant literature reviews… maybe more directions to be given to find out relevant information… The second point is very simple, providing more English assistance and English classes, and on how to write academic papers". (PG3)	some students are concerned with obtaining support to meet the HE requirements such as literature reviews, and academic writing, which presented by Gosling (2003)
Others Impact		
Key distillations	*Representative quotes*	*My learning on the comments and its relevance to the WBL programme in HK*
Distance learning & blended learning	(1) Sense of distant "I don't think WBL in Hong Kong is a distance learning, because I have frequent contacts with my tutors, and with peers. We also attend the classes at the classroom". (UG3) (2) Blended learning "I think work based learning is something between full-time or conventional one and distance learning. Some courses in between. This means for someone, they want to study distant basically they don't want to spend the time to attend the	HK is a small city, and there are frequent contacts among students, and between students and tutors, and regular tutorials at the HKWBL centre. The students do not feel that the 'transaction distance' as suggested by Moore & Kearsley (1996) is a problem. WBL has the flexibility to be offered in a (pure) distance learning mode or blended mode. WBL has the benefit of offering flexibility as suggested by Boud (1996) to those students who do not want to attend the classes.

	class". (PG2)	
Students' suitability and mismatching	(1) Students' suitability "I think it is like fifty-fifty… because it's so flexible so the students really have to work hard by themselves not only like you go to school and you attend a class and then you do the exam and finish. It is not like that kind of thing, so you have to be more self-motivated… so it depends on how the student takes and how the student adapts to that kind of learning environment". (T1)	WBL may have its inclusive nature for HE; however, not every student is suitable to pursue it, as it requires a high level of self-discipline, self-motivation, and time management in managing self-directed learning as suggested by Higher Education Academy Accessed 2017). There might be misconceptions from the students who think that WBL is flexible and an easy way to attain a degree qualification. This may imply the need for elaborating the self-management quality for WBL and screening suitable applicants before admission to the programme.
	(2) Mismatching on WBL "I have to say that there might be a little bit of mismatch. Because a lot of students when they came into this programme, they are still not sure. They're still not clear about the principles of WBL. So, they're in a knowledge acquire mode which is the more traditional skill	Most students join the WBL programme without a sufficient understanding of the principles, concepts, and processes of WBL. This means that the HK WBL tutors need to explain the differences in learning concepts, approaches, and

	transfer type of education programme as opposed to work-based learning. So, I said, there needs to be a very particular emphasis to educate the students about this". (T2)	processes between the WBL programme and traditional education programme, which requires the students to adopt a different learning approach (Gosling 2008) on joining the WBL programme.
English language proficiency	(1) Student - not a challenge "I won't say it is a challenge, I would say the proficiency of English does help, and the advantage while you're taking the course because it saves time from finding definitions or the words in sentence from dictionaries ". (UG3) (2) Student - challenge "It is a challenge for me. Why… because you reckon you need to improve my English proficiency… I can comment that during the WBL program, I had used more English than the sum of my whole life. I have never read and write so much English in my life… But this is a positive point of the WBL programme". (PG3) (3) Tutor - challenge "I think in the Hong Kong context especially, language is one of the	The student does not find the English language proficiency a hurdle in pursuing the WBL programme. Another PG student finds the English language a challenge in studying the WBL programme but regards it as a positive aspect to enhancing his English language proficiency. However, the tutor thinks that the English language, particularly, academic

	problems, especially those who didn't have their first degree. Their English is part of the most difficult part... for the student to overcome. So, how they write their English, especially in the academic writing it's quite difficult for them". (T1)	writing, seems to be a big barrier for students studying the WBL programme.
	(4) Expatriate tutor's view "But again, because they are working in a second language, it means they have to spend more time to understand the content of the learning and the resource packs. In addition to that, they then have to do more research around the reading. They are working, they are studying part-time, they are studying in a second language there are certainly some barriers for the students to overcome…However, they should have, if they have come through an English language system, English language education, they should be able to cope with it". (T3) "I don't think it is an issue if they spend the time to draft their thoughts, and to write them and to work with their adviser. With Hong Kong students, it's more an issue with time. They don't spend	HK students are studying WBL programmes in a second language; therefore, it poses certain barriers, but these are not insurmountable. Many HK students went through an English education system (i.e. English college using English as a medium of instruction in most classes); therefore, English language proficiency is not a major issue. The students need to find the time and reflect on the workplace experience and impact, draft the account in simple English, contact the adviser for feedback on the

	enough time in drafting their work. I don't think English language should be a huge barrier to them, because you can write about these things in simple words, you don't need to use difficult and complex sentences. It can be written simply, but it's actually being able to reflect personally about their experience during that process and the impact. And that can be done simply, but they need to be able to spend time writing drafts, correcting drafts". (T3)	draft, re-draft and fine-tune the thought process, and finally correct the draft and articulate the relevant learning.

The key points from the interview data (Students and Tutors) and my comments on its relevance to the HK WBL Programmes can be summarised as follows:

High Impact

Understanding and recognising the differences

It is important to understand WBL as a Mode 2 knowledge, which is recognised and embedded within the practices and the practitioner can conduct research to enhance his or her practice; i.e. creating knowledge. WBL programmes differ from traditional education programmes that focus on transfer of knowledge from teacher to student, WBL focuses on discovery of knowledge by the students through studying and critically reflecting on their own practices, this viewpoint must be elaborated and stressed to the students.

Teaching & learning of WBL

The WBL is student-centred and its teaching and learning are participatory using discussions and guidance to facilitate reflections. WBL uses Schon's (1983) concept of 'reflective practitioner' to continue studying and improving one's practices and performances.

Tutor quality and support

In general, respondents thought the quality of tutors is important. The tutors need to have sufficient professional experience, be able to provide authentic case studies and tasks, relating practices to theories, and facilitating discussions, reflections, and learning. In addition, tutors need to be able to provide genuine student cares and support to the WBL students who are busy working professionals and had been studying for a while.

Medium Impact

Flexibility and inclusiveness of WBL programme

WBL is flexible and it has no fixed syllabus, using the learners' work roles and professional practices as the curriculum to enhance their professional practices and development. WBL also enables professional practitioners to join the HE by recognising their professional learning by compiling an APEL claim.

Learning needs and approaches of professional practitioners

The WBL programme provides opportunities to professional practitioners to pursue a HE degree programme and to enhance their professional practices and career development to meet their learning needs.

Challenges and learning support

WBL learners face challenges of balancing full-time work and part-time studies. Good time management and self-discipline are critical success factors in pursuing the WBL programme. Learning Support in the areas of literature review and academic writing are also important to the students' success in WBL.

Other Impact

Distance learning & blended learning

For the HK students, the WBL programme is not perceived as a distance learning programme because HK is a small city and there are frequent contacts among the students, and between students and the tutors, and regular tutorials at the HKWBLC. However, the WBL programme has the flexibility to be offered purely as in a distance learning mode and/or a blended mode.

Students' suitability and mismatching

Not everyone is suitable for WBL, which requires self-discipline self-motivation and good time management; therefore, it is important to screen the applicants and explain to them in detail the nature of pursuing a WBL programme, in order to avoid mismatching.

English language proficiency

The students and tutors present conflicting views on English language proficiency, whereas the former claimed that it is not a challenge, the latter stated otherwise. In general, the English language proficiency issue can be resolved by giving more time for the students to reflect, prepare draft coursework in simple English and asking for tutors' feedback to articulate the professional learning explicitly.

Tabulation of Interview Data (Students and Tutors) Key Points in Relation to the Research Objectives

Below Table 4.3.3 presents the key distillations of interview data in relation to the research objectives.

Table 4.3.3 Tabulation of Key Points for Interview Data in Relation to the Research Objectives

Major research objectives	*Key distillations*	*Representatives quotes*
Differences	(1) Inclusivity	"I quite understand for someone if they want to study a master's degree, there is some pre-requirements… Yes, but for those already have a rich experience. Even though academically they are not that good. But I think this programme can give them some allowance." (PG2)
	(2) Flexibility - no fixed syllabus	"You have to make it your own effort more in the WBL programme, but that will give you a more flexibility, and then you can have more creative and then if you put more effort you can learn a broader knowledge… But in WBL there is no syllabus, so you cannot ask everything you want to so easy, so it is a boarder way to learn more knowledge or deepen the knowledge." (UG1)
	(3) Work-related and practical	"… due to all the assignments and works is in work… work experience to share in my assignment is… at the same time, I can reflect my work setting… anything I can improve… Yes, and also sometimes we will have a project like design a programme… actually, I can use that programme back to my work in my job." (PG1)

Suitability	(1) Learning needs of professional practitioners	"So, I think the WBL programme can help me to re-organise all my skills, knowledge in the training field… I want to facilitate all my skills and knowledge in my workplace, to consolidate, so that I can have a better performance." (PG3)
	(2) Challenges	"… so, they need to have a very good time management to balance their work and then the school work… WBL programme has to have a good self-discipline… they need to proactively to learning." (UG1)
	(3) Adult learning approach	"The tutors share their professional experience with us and encourage the students to have discussion… the tutors use our work practices and problems to illustrate the teaching and learning. It is result-oriented which would give the solutions to our working problems." (UG1)
Enhancements	(1) Peer learning	"…there should be more group discussions or maybe a group work assignment… yes, on group work, we had a lot of peer teaching, peer learning." (PG1)

	(2) Support	"I would like to mention two points I think can really help WBL students. The first is tell us how to find relevant literature reviews… maybe more directions to be given to find out relevant information… The second point is very simple, providing more English assistance and English classes, and on how to write academic papers." (PG3)
	(3) Familiarisation of participants	"I think we can share some experience by the tutors or even by the students who studied the programme before… if they come back to school for our lessons, we may have some specific questions to ask them such as how can you manage the time in order to complete the lesson before? I think this may help the new students… if we understand more the backgrounds of the tutors at the beginning also may help us. At least it will give as little more confidence to the students because we know by the time like the sixth module will be taught by a very professional athlete, may be or very high-rank police officer, which is very good experience…". (UG3)

Analyses and Summarised Presentation of Interview Data (Organisations)

The major interview findings will be tabulated in the below Table 4.3.4:

Table 4.3.4 Analyses and Summarised Presentation of Interview Data (Organisations)

Major interview items	*Extracted findings from the Interviews*	
Advantages and Disadvantages of WBL Programme	*Advantages*	*Disadvantages*
	"Work based learning… can work very tightly with the contents of the working environment so that to the student itself, it is much more practical to apply their work-life routine job or project combined with their study… because what you did actually can reflect to your studies and also can benefit your work". (E1)	"I am not sure whether it is professional enough compared to another academic-focused topic…compared to let's say some traditional university or graduate programme, they are much more focused on going back to school and use the other company examples, so is there any difference, that is the thing I am not sure". (E1)
	"With regard to advantages, I think the programme is able to provide part-time study format for students. And it also fits our company's needs because students/staff can go attend classes in the evening. And they can study part-time, and also another advantage is that the programme provides the projects,	"I can't think of any detailed or exact disadvantages, but I think it might be that for the time being. It might need more external perspectives, like apart from the staff's own, other company or organisation work projects and plus the theories". (E2)

	and the homework assignments based on what you work, and then you can actually find projects from work, topic related to the staff daily work function or work challenges, that adds on to the programme content itself we are not just learning concepts or theories stuff, we are able to practice while working on the work projects". (E2) "I think because the WBL programme can provide some extra credits… then, one of the returns on investment option is to provide credit…and it would be an incentive for the staff to attend the courses". (E2)	
	"So, I think this is good that there is additional channels like the WBL programme… other than the formal academic curriculum… should be very much related to work. So, it would be very practical… it should be somehow they build in the real-life practices into the programme. That would be the major differentiation of the WBL programme as compared to pure academic programme". (P1)	"Disadvantage I can only see on the teaching staff…Because it's supposed to be practical... So, if you are asking like a professor, a pure professor to teach this work based learning programme… might not be a good match because I suppose the students taking the WBL programme they somehow would like to hear the experience sharing… I am talking about the real-life sharing… similar to our HRM…." (P1)

	"But if … you know the field of HRM has continued to evolve in terms of the subject matter, for example like this couple of years we talk about data analytics, technology… go digital… so if the university … if the formal academic programme hasn't been able to respond to that challenging need,… if the WBL programme, they are fast enough… if they are agile programme they can immediately … just build in those new HRM trends into the programme. So, they can have the advantage… I think the first priority is to really differentiate themselves from the academic programme… from the full-time programme". (P1)	
	"I think the advantage will definitely be the flexibility, that allows working people to continue like taking their professionalism to the next degree and time flexibility… it's really well recognised, so it would be good for the career". (P2)	"… there will be pressure to complete within the limited timeframe… that would be one of the disadvantages and the cost as well". (P2)

Learning needs and development needs for workplace skills	"Usually I heard they would like to polish about the skill on the problem solving, and also want to have some good stakeholder management…then some of them maybe wish to learn some more on how to make up their emotional control". (E1) "…team building is also important, but actually is very much related to let's say how you do the communication, if you do the communication well, usually your teamwork will also well. But if you are weak in presenting yourself and along with other people… disagreements, then you also don't got a good teamwork". (E1)
	"I think that the learning needs would most likely be like having an analytical mindset, critical thinking, social skills, like how to network with different people form different industries… be able to network and socialise with other people, which in turn, I think would change and move up the management hierarchy, will train up our staff with political savvy, and how to manage upwards and downwards. (E2)
	"Actually, the institute ran a survey a couple of years ago… but we are talking about new graduates… the top 5 weaknesses … the top one is problem-solving… the second one is ability to work under pressure… third is communication skills… the fourth one is good attitude or personality or getting motivated… common sense and then planning and organisation". (P1) "… I always say that if all my managers, my reporting manager… they can manage their own business And they can… proven to have problem-solving skills… then my job will be a lot easier… and secondly, I think is technology savvy… with the increasing digitalised working environment… another would be… well to me it is about sense-making … making sense of the situation, making sense of the project you are doing… you can grasp the big picture". (P1)

	"They need to have their working knowledge and then… language skills, IT skills …". (P2)
Views on incorporating WBL into the organisation's employee development/CPD	"Yes, that will be a benefit to them, because to the colleagues itself, they can finish the course and also got the credit… and the qualification would be another benefit to them". (E1)
	"I think this programme can also be incorporated into our organisational learning and development curriculum… Not sure about the exact format at the moment, but the approach can be like, usually we would provide 2 to 4 days training programme for our staff, so this WBL programme can be part of those 4 days. And then we can partner with different tutors and professors from Middlesex, and then we can incorporate some of the existing training to…" (E2)
	"That is possible because we already have the mechanism of requiring our members… you know if they want to renew their professional membership, they need CPD, so we are not limiting them to get the CPD from the institute… there are so many options outside if there is a programme…Joint programme, partnership or I encourage them to join your programme… ". (P1)
	"It depends on whether people have enough time to do it because usually for our attendants they prefer to have just CPD hours. So, complete the entire course it will be quite time-consuming. So, it really depends on how much time it takes for the work based learning and how much commitment they need to put in". (P2)
Preferred WBL structure & tutor	"For work based learning, if I can choose, then I prefer the external trainer…Somehow we are expertise in this industry, experience in our

qualities	group, however, we need some fresh eye…she can bring up the other company good example to us so that it can inspire us to think something more…the tutor if I can choose I prefer they can have solid experience in the related field ” (E1)
	“Well, I think the programme structure… so right now, it is an evening workshop or classes from 7 to 10 pm, so it’s a 3-hours content, so it can be easily incorporated into our existing organisation training programme. So, we can get a tutor from Middlesex and then join us for the 3-hours or 4-hours session in our training programme, to teach, let say, how to do research…because a lot of projects which our company is currently working on need a lot of staff to indeed know how to research with their correct format or approach, so 4-hours, into the 4-days or 3-days programme”. (E2) “… facilitate the discussions and then provide external perspective. Experience like for example, how to inspire students or staff in critical thinking or to do research, and then, have experience from outside business or in Hong Kong.
	“I think we would like to have a signature programme… For example, may be … because there are like too many formal institutes, they are running HRM bachelor programme… so maybe the institute would like to have a postgraduate programme… like strategic HR… including like OD strategy, change management, transformation… more strategic ones…”. (P1) “I am not looking for someone with like a doctorate or… but having a master's degree is very common now, but I don’t come across practising HR they are likely to have a doctorate degree, so I guess top consideration will be their experience… if we are talking about all this in OD and HR strategy, it’s better that they are exposed to a more regional level…. They are from like an international firm… they have been there for a convincing number of years… it’s also better they are

	all rounded HR… have been exposed to all facets of HRM throughout their career, and then ended up as like a HR director of a large scale organisation… that is why the best would be for those who have been with the corporate world for all their life and they become consultants themselves… before they become consultant, they must have some formal training… need some process and tools and analytical skills… presentation skills". (P1) "The programme content… what are the trends… it is not only that we can tap into the current situation but we can anticipate… what are the next generation of HR… what do they need… what kind of skills are they supposed to build… like in the next 5 years, for example, we always talk now is the interface of the human and the machine… for HR it is still the same". (P1)
	"I would like to … at least have some professors from Middlesex … from UK… I think it will be a joint programme… you accredit part of our programme and we accredit your programme so we both come out with some facilitators. So, you can have some professors… or some professors from the university and we have some experienced members to share their experience". (P2)

Document Presentation and Analyses

Middlesex University uses the Board of Studies (BoS) to collect feedback from students and tutors on their views of the delivery of the programme, the purpose of which is to identify and examine problems and find ways to overcome the issues and enhance practices in programme delivery. The BoS is held once a year and its minutes are an official record on the meetings. The BoS minutes represent a rich source of information on the delivery of the WBL programmes over the years. It also provides a source of documentation to triangulate the questionnaire and interview data collected. It is important to note that minutes are taken by

the secretary of the Board of Studies and the recording of the minutes may be subjective in some ways. For example, the secretary may not fully understand the view of the respondents, and/or draft the message in a way that interprets rather than records which may be due to the bi-lingual context as well as the recorder's way of taking notes. Hence, the chair of the BoS serves as a checking mechanism to verify if the draft minutes represent fairly the respondents' views. In addition, the draft minutes are circulated to all BoS participants for confirmation before finally being released and made available to students and tutors. Unlike the questionnaires, the BoS minutes are qualitatively explored to surface concerns that students have about their learning experience. Keyword analysis was also used in this case.

Distilling Key Points from Undergraduates Board of Studies Minutes

After reading, examining, and reviewing the minutes several times, the content of these undergraduate BoS minutes is summarised in a tabulation format for presentation and analysis, grouped in the following areas: WBL characteristics, programme structure, teaching and learning, and support.

The students tend to find the WBL programme difficult and different from the traditional programme, which requires more time for them to adapt. The traditional programme is mainly spoon-feeding where the WBL is mostly self-study and requires self-discipline. WBL also requires the students to reflect on their practice and review their professional development. However, the students begin to enjoy WBL after completing the first module, and they can apply their work experience to the coursework preparations, and the students appreciate the huge amount of support from the tutors. The students appreciate that the WBL programme is flexible, work-related, inclusive and suitable for professional practitioners. The students learn a lot and improve their research and English writing skills. The tutors think that most students do not understand WBL's requirements and expectations on coursework and suggest that there should be a better induction to familiarise students with WBL concepts and processes; whereas, students need to change their learning style to become positive and pro-active learners. Tutors think that WBL is new to the students and they require time to adapt to the learning mode; in addition, students require time for reading and digesting materials,

reviewing critically to produce work to bachelor's degree level; and the students require self-motivation to complete the WBL programme.

The students suggest re-scheduling the WBS 3220 Effective Writing for Professional Practice module before WBS 3630 Professional Practitioner Inquiry module, so that the students could have better learning on literature searches and directions to plan and prepare their projects. It is suggested to have the WBS 2815 Programme Planning module scheduled in the middle of the programme so that students could have a clearer direction for their project planning. It is difficult to plan a project title at the beginning of the programme, and it would be helpful to have an additional session for this complex Programme Planning module as sometimes, students find it difficult reviewing and linking their past learning, present planning, and future professional development together in this module. The students also suggest re-arranging the sequencing of the WBS 4630 Advanced Practitioner Inquiry to the beginning, as they find it difficult to plan the project without research methods knowledge. In addition, the students do not expect to have lots of written work for the WBL programme which is supposed to be a practical course. The tutors designed the Effective Writing for Professional Practice in two parts and introduce the UniHub tools to students at the beginning of the programme to support their academic writing and e-resources. The tutors also suggest making the Briefing on Project Oral Presentation Session compulsory to ensure students receive formative feedback on their projects and encourage them to practice the oral presentation in advance. The tutors agree to conduct the WBS 2815 Programme Planning and WBS 3630 Professional Practitioner Inquiry session together so that students can obtain a holistic perspective on their past, present and future professional learning/developments. As Programme Planning seems to be a difficult module, tutors agree to offer an additional session for that module. The tutors remark that WBL is a self-discovery learning process that is facilitated by reflection, and the Programme Planning process is an iterative process characterised by continuous improvement. The tutors note that most students do not understand the requirements of WBL and expectations of the coursework, students should read more of the module handbook and reference books rather than expecting to be spoon-fed information and resources. There should be an additional session on induction to familiarise students with the WBL process.

The students agree with the set-up of a peer study group to support learning and suggest that some individual coursework can be changed to group assignments to encourage interaction

and discussions among students. Some students like to do things step-by-step and require clear guidelines. Tutors suggest that it would be good to create a peer group to motivate and encourage students to communicate and work together. Some students may lack extensive practices, which may be difficult for them to learn because the WBL process offers insights to the students who are required to reflect on practice to enhance learning.

The students agree that tutorial sessions are important for them to progress their learning and they would like to obtain more feedback from tutors through face-to-face or email contacts. It would be helpful for students to have a preparatory session for each module before the new semester so that they have sufficient time to read and understand the learning materials. Students appreciate the support and advice from the tutors. Without these comments and advice on module requirements, the students would not be able to complete their coursework. The tutors think that the feedback offered at the project oral presentation is good for students to fine-tune the written project before final submission. Some students have difficulties in incorporating conflicting feedback from the Module Tutor and Supervisor. In addition, the students would like the tutors to provide feedback on draft work within a reasonable timeline and provide feedback to students on grades and coursework submitted. The students find the e-learning resource and the tutors' Suggested Format of Coursework useful in completing their coursework, but some students find the university's online learning platform (i.e. UniHub) not user-friendly. Also, they do not find the guidelines in the module handbook clear and specific. Module tutors appreciate full support from the programme leader on offering related teaching materials and briefing to facilitate the teaching and learning of WBL. Training and development of tutors are important which include workshops provided by London colleagues, either face-to-face or via skype; regular local workshops on experience sharing on teaching and assessments and e-submission system. The tutors should be briefed on the different roles and types of feedback provided by the Supervisor and the Module Tutor respectively, where the former focuses on the content, and the latter focuses on the format and flow. In general, the tutors think that there are sufficient materials and resources to support their work. The tutors encourage the students to use more of the UniHub to help to prepare their WBS 3220 Effective Writing for Professional Practitioner coursework and are prepared to offer additional tutorials to students to familiarise them with the use of university e-learning resource system (i.e. UniHub). In addition, the tutors would like to have an additional UniHub workshop for students to familiarise them with the e-resource learning system. The module handbooks are useful to students and provide guidance to their studies

and students should read them carefully. It requires more support and time to facilitate students to transit from traditional mode of teaching and learning to the WBL, particularly at the beginning of the programme; and there should be extra and enhanced induction sessions to enable the students to have a better understanding of the WBL concepts and processes. The tutors are happy to provide support to the students provided the latter to take the initiative of contacting them. The tutors suggest having a bi-weekly WBL forum to help and support the students before their coursework submission. It is noted that students do not fully use the Centre's meeting venues and reading resources.

Summarised Key Points from the Postgraduates Board of Studies Minutes

From the presentation and analyses of the postgraduate BoS minutes, the WBL programme is different from the traditional programme, its unique features require different teaching practices and learning approaches. The students do not understand the WBL concept and processes and find the sequencing of modules confusing and ask for re-scheduling and extra sessions. The WBL programme uses peer learning as its teaching and learning strategy, facilitating interactions and discussions among the students, and the issue is how to encourage the students to set up peer learning groups to communicate and discuss more. The WBL programme provides plenty of support to the students either through on-line resources and face-to-face feedback from the tutors; there are issues to be resolved in relation to the ease of using online resources and timely feedback by the tutors. Similarly, after reading, examining, and reviewing the minutes several times, the content of these postgraduate BoS minutes is summarised in a tabulation format for presentation and analysis, grouped in the following areas: WBL characteristics, programme structure, teaching and learning, and support.

WBL is work related and provides learning and impact on the students' professional development. It requires a different approach to learning and reflection on practices, and self-discipline and self-initiative to become an independent learner. Most students do not understand the concept and process of WBL, which require time for adaptation and enhanced induction for familiarisation.

Many students do not understand the requirements of the WBL programme and expectations of the coursework. The Programme Planning module seems to be a difficult module as it links the students' past learning, present planning, and future professional development together. In addition, the students find it confusing as they were asked to develop a project title at the Programme Planning stage without prior teaching on Research Methods. There are problems in the sequencing of the modules.

The WBL programme uses peer learning to facilitate learning among the students; therefore, it is important to encourage the set-up of a peer learning group to enhance communications and discussions among the students.

WBL students receive plenty of support from tutors and online resources. The issue is how to get the students to prepare draft coursework for the tutor to provide timely formative feedback to enhance learning. The University's online resources are useful, and the question is how to make them more accessible. On the other hand, there is the issue of support for tutor training and development, as they are a critical success factor in the effective delivery of the WBL programme.

Overview of the Recurring Issues in the BoS Minutes over the Years and Thoughts for the Future

Overview of the Recurring Issues in the BoS Minutes over the Years and thoughts for the future is listed below:

Recurring issues feedback over time	*Programme team' actions*	*My professional insights on the expected outcomes*
1. WBL Students find WBL different and difficult but begin to appreciate the	This issue recurred 4 out of the 5-years for the students, which is natural as WBL is new to the HK students and they are not adapted to	Despite the 3-hours Induction, the latest intake of students still feedbacks on their confusion.

WBL process after the first module	its learning and teaching processes. The first time this came up our response was to introduce a three-hour induction The programme team is happy to see that the students are beginning to appreciate the WBL process after the initial difficult period and note that the students will require time to adapt to the WBL processes.	However, the students who had been with the programme longer had adjusted through experiencing it. For the students to experience its benefits sooner from this research, I plan to change the Induction into two parts I will separate processes and procedures from content and philosophy. I will design 'an experience' for them which demonstrates how it works and support this with archived documentary material like podcasts from students who have completed.
1.2 Students find WBL flexible, inclusive and suitable	Students mentioned this issue on two occasions in the BoS minutes. They found WBL flexible due to its self-deferral mechanism, inclusiveness on its open admission to working professionals, and a flexible learning mode that is suitable for their busy schedules.	I think that these are the key benefits of the WBL programme. However, I should emphasise to the students that the WBL programme is rigorous and is not an easy-way-out to top-up to a degree qualification. Self-managed learning is new to many local students.

1.3 Students learn a lot, particularly in Research and English Writing skills	The programme team notes that the students learned in the WBL processes, particularly in Research skills and English writing skills when they were going through or completing the WBL programme.	I have been reflecting on that development in research and writing skills and I believe this is a by-product of learning to express yourself in a different way from traditional methods that require a didactic response in the sense of responding using the words of the enquirer. But reflection requires a more individual thought process which needs different vocabulary and expressions. Students are fascinated that critical reflection can also be an effective research method. It is good to see that the students enhanced their Research skills and English writing skills during the WBL programmes. To take advantage of that for new intakes we could add reflective writing sessions as a regular feature. In terms of methodology, one session could be if the student did not know about methodology, what would

		they design to get the data they want. This would help them to see that methodology is not some academic sacred thing but is often common sense.
2. Programme structure 2.1 Students suggest the re-sequencing of Programme Planning module	The programme team had tried on several occasions to re-sequence the Programme Planning module but did not yield satisfactory results. We had tried to place the module holistically encompassing the students' review of learning, programme planning, and research methods; and deliver the two modules (i.e. Programme Planning and Research Methods together) concurrently.	There is nothing much we can do about the programme structure of the WBL programme. The mere re-sequencing of the Programme Planning module did not seem to be effective. It would be difficult for the students to consider a suitable WBL research project area/title before they had any prior research knowledge and skills. However, we could introduce research designing earlier on and exchange ideas on how they would design it and we would give them guidelines of things to think about when designing.

3. Teaching & learning		
3.1 Students suggest that there should be group assignments	There is little of the programme team can do about this. As the WBL programme only allows group work in the WBL project. That is, students can do a joint project, but they need to rationalise it, and usually, they are from the same organisation.	The programme team agrees that group work has its benefits in peer learning. I personally think it may be possible for students to do more collaborative group work in the non-WBL core module; e.g. in the accredited activities. In addition, the University may try to explore additional ways for students to undertake group work in their WBL coursework.
3.2 Students suggest setting up a peer study group and Tutors agreed that peer learning is important	Both the students and tutors agree that it is useful for the students to set up a peer study group for them to support each other and to yield peer learning. The programme team always encourage the students to use the Centre's facilities to book venues for study group discussions.	To encourage further peer learning, I think I shall in future encourage the students to form a study group/team and they need to give a presentation on the tutorial topics and/or their individual partially-prepared coursework for the group's feedback.

4. Support 4.1 Students appreciate lots of support from tutors	In overcoming the challenges for the WBL students, the programme team had offered plenty of support to the students to facilitate their completion of the coursework and programme.	On reflection, these are reactive measures taken by the programme team to guide the students on how to prepare their coursework; whereas, the students should not be so dependent on the tutors but to find out the course learning objectives, learning outcomes, and coursework and assessment requirements themselves.
4.2 Students think that advisory and tutorial sessions are important as they provide directions for preparing coursework	The students tend to rely on the tutors to provide them clear ideas and directions to prepare their coursework	
4.3 Students appreciate the Suggested Format for Coursework	The programme leader had extracted the coursework requirements from the respective module handbooks and come up with the Suggested Format for Coursework to facilitate the students to prepare their coursework.	These measures are similar to the traditional courses' assessment-oriented approach, which is contrary to the WBL learning and teaching concepts and processes. In this respect, the programme team may also be at fault in adopting an assessment-oriented approach in facilitating the students to prepare and complete their coursework. In the future, I should

		encourage the students to prepare their own Suggested Format for the Coursework and present it at the tutorial for class discussion, making sure they understand the course requirements before preparing their coursework. If future, I suggest that we should emphasise more on facilitating the students to be self-directed and autonomous learners, and not be teacher-dependent.
4.4 Tutors suggest students should refer more to module handbooks on coursework requirements 4.5 Tutors think that students should be encouraged to use more of the support of tutors and resources	The programme team always ask the students to read and refer to the module handbooks on the coursework requirements, rather than depending on the tutors telling them what to do. The programme team always encourage the students to use more of the support of tutors, resources, and facilities.	I agree with the expatriate tutor's comment that the WBL is a heavily resourced programme. The problem is how to encourage the students to use the resources effectively. For example, the students should take time to understand the tutors' formative feedback, search for literature and resources to prepare their coursework, and use the Centre's venues for study group discussions. However, all these require

		the students taking initiatives.

After presenting and analysing the various forms of data, I now turn to Chapter 5, Discussions and Interpretations of the research finding.

5 Discussions and Interpretations

The WBL programme has unique features that make it different from the traditional education programmes in HK and may be contrary to established teaching and learning styles. This may mean the programme is unsuitable and result in difficulties for the professional practitioners. The unsuitability requires understanding and recognition of the characteristics of the WBL concepts and its processes. The difficulties require enhancements and adaptations in the WBL teaching and learning processes to make them more culturally relevant to the HK context.

Frame for Discussions and Interpretations

The research findings will be discussed and interpreted in a constructed perspective that aims to provide answers to the following questions which motivated this research:

(1) What are the major differences between the teaching and learning styles of WBL and those of traditional education programmes? – Difference

(2) Is WBL a suitable learning approach in Hong Kong? – Suitability

(3) How could WBL teaching and learning styles and delivery be improved to make the programme more appropriate for Hong Kong professional practitioners? – Enhancement

In Chapter 4, I presented and analysed the various sources of data, and some major and subordinate themes emerged from the data that have gone some way to answering the research questions, can be tabulated as follows:

Table 5.1 Constructed Perspective - Major Themes Against Research Objectives

Research Objectives	*Major Themes Emerged from the Data*
(1) Differences	Characteristics and recognition
(2) Suitability	Expectations and challenges
(3) Enhancements	Learning approaches and teaching practices

Differences

It has several distinct characteristics and conceptual underpinnings. The WBL programme is different from the traditional education programme because it has its unique features and characteristics suggested by Brenan (2005) and influenced by the Confucius Heritage Culture (Watkins 1996) in its teaching and learning process. These differences (mainly cultural differences) need to be fully understood and recognised by the major stakeholders to realise its significant potential and this is an area that can certainly be improved: helping employers and students to understand the value of the approach and the approach itself. The differences also need to be understood by the teaching staff.

Suitability

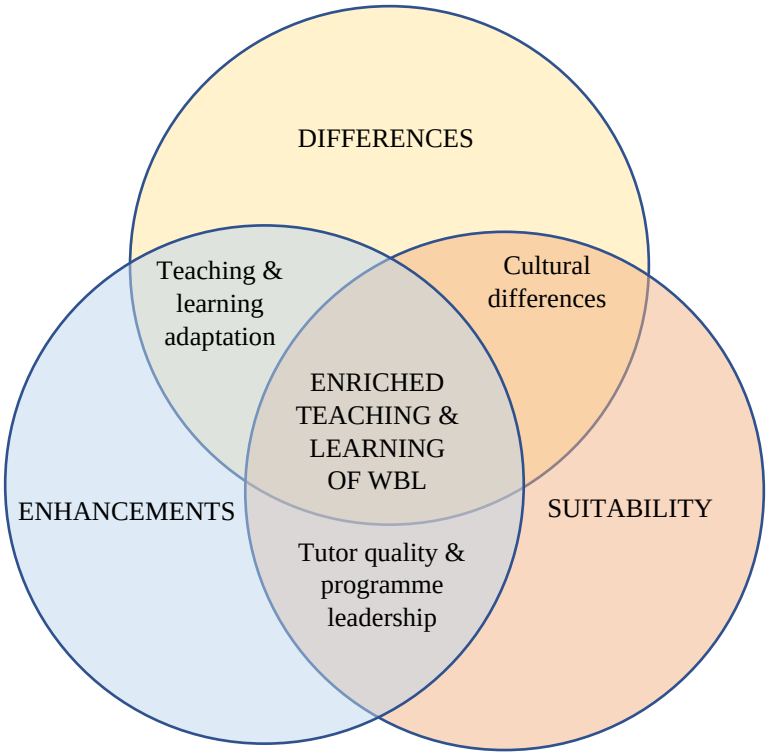
The suitability of WBL as a learning approach to the HK professional practitioners relates to the extent that WBL benefits and meets the stakeholders' needs. If it does not fully meet their expectations, it would then result in challenges that require resources (mainly in tutor quality and programme leadership) to overcome them.

Enhancements

Enhancement measures can be made (mainly in adaptations of approaches and practices) in the delivery of the WBL programme, by also making it more culturally relevant to the HK context, and producing enriched WBL programmes to the professional practitioners.

Figure 5.1 below shows how the dimensions overlap and affect each other.

Figure 5.1 Frame for Discussions and Interpretations



Differences

Compared to traditional education programmes, WBL has its differences in three main aspects; characteristic, cultural differences in teaching and learning, and learning strategies for the facilitation of learning.

Characteristics

The single most important factor affecting the success and progression of the students' learning in the WBL programme seems to be insufficient understanding and recognition of its characteristics and conceptual underpinnings. Many of the students do not fully understand

the characteristics of the WBL concepts and processes, learning approaches, and teaching practices. These views are strongly reflected by the students in the open-ended questions in the survey, which call for recognition and promotion of the WBL programme. The interviewed tutors also echo the students' lack of understanding of the WBL concept and teaching and learning process; and at times, the tutors themselves find it unclear.

Work-related

All respondents agree that WBL is work-related and practical. The questionnaire findings show that WBL can facilitate the development of workplace skills and employability. Both the students and the tutors interviewed acknowledge that WBL is the knowledge that is derived from work, and it is an efficient way of learning, as the students can readily apply the coursework to their workplace and organisation projects. At the BoS, students report that WBL is useful and impactful to their professional practices and development. WBL has its practical implications in being work-related and it enhances people's workplace skills and employability. It is important that the University and HKWBLC should promote the direct benefits of the WBL programme, using it as a mean for continuing education, professional and career development. It can also fulfil governments' policy objectives on enhancing workforce skills and continuing education and lifelong learning such as in the UK.

Inclusiveness

The WBL programme is embedded with the inclusive philosophy of education for all. It provides an opportunity for professional practitioners to continue their HE. The interviewed students and tutors recognise and appreciate the provision of WBL as the students would not have been accepted by the local universities that had higher requirements for admission. In HK, we collaborate with partner institutes to provide continuing education opportunities to working adults, recognising the knowledge and skills that they gained from the workplace and admitting them to continuing HE. This is also acknowledged by students at the BoS where they appreciated the inclusive nature of the WBL programme. However, as all WBL learners are part-time students, who have been absent from schooling for a while, they are not accustomed to academic requirements, and so they may require more support from the tutors.

Flexible Curriculum

Many WBL students do not understand that the WBL process has no fixed syllabus and this may be contrary to their learning culture. The WBL(MU) programme encourages learners to be agents of change with the aim of enhancing their professional performance through review and reflection on professional practices. The students interviewed agreed that WBL provides a broader learning environment though it has no fixed syllabus because it relates to the students' enhancements of their professional practices and development holistically. The students interviewed seem to understand the negotiated learning nature of the WBL programme. In other words, the syllabus is being negotiated by three major stakeholders (parties) in the programme planning process, ensuring that the amount and level of learning reaches the requirements of the students in terms of their professional development, the university in terms of its academic standards, and the employers in terms of the employees' (students') project impact and career development.

The characteristics of the WBL programme imply that the students and some tutors do not have a full understanding of the characteristics or recognition of the theoretical underpinnings of the WBL teaching and learning processes. This calls for elaboration and promotion of the WBL concepts on the part of the HKWBLC through broader induction and clearer information session when recruiting students as currently, the HKWBLC does not have a separate induction course for the WBL programme.

Cultural Differences in Teaching and Learning

According to Hofstede (1986), there are cultural differences in the conceptions of 'student-teacher relations' and 'student participation' of different countries. The former affects the teaching style and the latter affects the learning style in the teaching and learning process.

Cultural Differences in Teaching Styles

In HK, most interviewed WBL students reported that the usual teaching style is a one-way didactic style that emphasise the transfer of knowledge from the tutor to the student. WBL is a socially constructed knowledge that uses a constructivist approach in the learning process, and the tutors serve as facilitators, rather than instructors. However, all the WBL learners are

working adults and they are flexible in adapting to another teaching style. The questionnaire finding reports that about 63% of UG and 35% of PG students prefer the 'didactic' teaching style. As for the tutors, the great majority of advisers/supervisors adopt the 'two-way' teaching style; and none of the module tutors adopts the 'didactic' teaching style. The respective figures for advisers/supervisors and module tutors adopting the 'two-way' facilitative teaching style are 18% and 100%. At the BoS, the students also reported the interactive nature of the WBL teaching process. The perceived cultural differences in teaching and learning of the 'student-teacher relationship' that results from 'didactic' vs. 'facilitative' teaching style do not appear to be dominant in the case of HK as a great majority of the tutors adopt a 'facilitative' teaching style. The student representative also reports a supportive relationship between the students and the tutors, and the students appreciate the huge amount of support offered by the tutors. Most of the teaching and learning practices consist of discussions and sharing of experiences between the students and the tutors, and their close 'student-teacher relationship' would enhance the teaching and learning of the WBL programme.

Cultural Differences in Learning Styles

In the case of 'student-participation', 90 - 100% of the tutors would 'encourage students to have discussions and debates' with the tutors. The interviewed students also report close interactions and discussions between themselves and the tutors. There does not seem to be a cultural barrier to student participation in the teaching and learning process of the WBL programme in HK. Regarding learning style, around 85% of the UG students and 55% of the PG students would claim that their learning style is 'teacher-dependent', and not self-directed. This may be contrary to the essential philosophy of WBL which requires students to be self-directed learners. However, the figures show that PG students are more independent than the UG students because of the former's business maturity. On the other hand, more than 80% of the advisers/supervisors and all module tutors agree that the students should be responsible for their own learning. It seems that more effort should be provided by the programme team in changing the attitude of the learning styles of the students.

Interactive Teaching and Learning Process

Despite its Confucian-Heritage Learning Cultures (CHC), the HK professional practitioners can adopt an interactive teaching and learning process. Table 4.12 indicates only half of the UG students and less than a quarter of PG students would not 'argue with my teacher'. This

shows a two-way teaching and learning process between the tutors and the students, and the majority of WBL students engaged in dialogue in the teaching and learning process. The typical characteristics of the didactic teaching style and passive learning style associated with CHC do not seem to be dominant in the research finding. The interviewed students and the student representative at the BoS also report a close and interactive relationship between the students and their tutors. It is important to have good student-teacher relationships in the interactive and facilitative teaching and learning approach of the WBL programme.

Pedagogy and Culture

Hofstede's (1986) analyses of cultural dimensions on teaching and learning in HK, a CHC environment, may be regarded as stereotyping; however, it provides a generalised framework to present the values of education and characteristics of teaching and learning in different regions. As stated by Biggs (1996), there have been some re-interpretations on the characteristics of the 'Chinese learner' (Watkins, 1996), whose pedagogical approaches and practices may be fluid and adapting to the HK international contexts. These have been reflected by the questionnaire and interview findings of this report. The responses from the students and tutors were not fixed and indeed they are open to the Western facilitative and adult learning approaches of teaching and learning. This may be due to HK having been greatly influenced by the British HE system and being a regional hub situated between the East and the West. Hu's (2002) concept on the cultural resistance to import pedagogy did not happen in the case of WBL; instead, there had been a lack of recognition and understanding of the WBL concepts and teaching and learning processes. This may have been caused by the insufficient explanation in early marketing and induction sessions of HKWBLC. The local students are attracted by the WBL's inclusive admission and cost-efficiency and treating the WBL programme as an easy option for topping up to a UK degree qualification. According to some research studies, learning styles can be adapted and then adopted. Kennedy (2002) indicates that the HK adult Chinese learners could adapt to different learning styles that are more active than rote learning which they have been accustomed to at high school. Wong (2004) also finds the CHC students can adapt their learning style from a teacher-centred one to student-centred. Eaves (2011) agrees that CHC students can adapt their learning style moving to suit a Western (Australian) educational context. The adaptation of learning style can be achieved through careful construction of a safe, student-centred learning environment, which shows value for all students and encourages the active participation that leads to constructive changes in learning styles (Eaves 2011).

Facilitation of WBL

The facilitation of WBL involves using the following typical learning strategies to produce the respective learning and outcomes:

(i) Review of Learning and APEL - Reflective learning
(ii) Programme Planning – Capability, self-directed learning, and continuous professional development
(iii) Research methodology – Epistemology of knowledge and practitioner research
(iv) Practitioner-led project – Problem-based learning
(v) Reflection/reflexivity – Critical reflective learning

Each module's learning has its focus so it is important for the module tutors to understand each module's learning objectives and outcomes, and the respective facilitation involved.

Review of Learning

The 'Review of Learning' module requires effective teaching and learning practices for the learner to become reflective and reflexive. These involve the teaching and learning of reflection and reflexivity by emphasising the relationship between reflection and learning and encouraging students to write reflective journals to encourage them to strategically rethink the issues and their consequences, re-sharping their future actions.

Programme Planning

The 'Programme Planning' module entails the facilitation of self-directed learning, encouraging the students to be autonomous learners, equipping them with the capability and managing the major stakeholders' learning requirements in the programme planning negotiation.

Research Methods

The 'Research Methods' module requires a paradigm shift on the part of the WBL learners to become aware that knowledge is out there in the workplace, and the practitioner can undertake practitioner research to create knowledge resolving workplace issues. In addition, the practitioners need to be equipped with research skills, WBL research ethics, and an appreciation of the implications of the role duality in the practitioner research process.

Practitioner-led project

The ‘Practitioner-led Project’ module requires the facilitation of problem-based learning to enable the learners to engage in authentic situations, using an adult learning approach, analysing issues and solving workplace concerns. These imply that the tutors need to have a better understanding of the learning objectives and outcomes of each module and focus on facilitating the respective learning and outcomes.

Reflection/Reflexivity

Reflection is central to the teaching and learning of the WBL programme. Most of the students surveyed report that the WBL programme provides the opportunity to reflect on practice, which is useful to their professional practices. The interviewed students also comment that the WBL programme uses reflection as a learning strategy to give new perspectives. Students must be able to understand and appreciate the value of using reflection in the process of experiential learning.

Professional Insights

The WBL programme is different from the traditional course in three major aspects: characteristics, cultural differences in teaching and learning, and learning strategies for the facilitation of learning. The WBL programme is characterised by its work-relatedness, inclusiveness, and flexibility; these features are not fully understood and/or recognised by the students, and in some instances, by the tutors. These become the advantages and disadvantages of the WBL programme. The HKWBLC needs to explore and promote the advantages of the WBL programme, making more people aware of the benefits of it being work-related and practical, open-admission, and flexibility in teaching and learning. However, one also needs to guard against its misconceptions such as treating the WBL programme as less rigorous as the traditional education programme and using the WBL programme as a way-out to top-up to a degree qualification. It is essential to understand the WBL programme’s requirements on its concepts, processes, learning outcomes, and assessment criteria; most importantly, recognising that WBL is a Mode 2 knowledge, and students can create knowledge in their practitioner research at the workplace, which may require a paradigm shift for the local students and tutors.

The WBL(MU) programme is developed in the UK and its delivery in HK may face cultural differences in teaching and learning. HK students may be accustomed to a 'didactic' teaching style during their secondary schoolings and being brought up in the CHC (Watkins, 1996). Regarding the cultural differences on the 'student-teacher relationship' and 'student participation' issues, these do not appear to be major issues, in the case of HK WBL programme delivery. There are good 'student-teacher relationship' and 'student participation' in the supportive and interactive process of teaching and learning. Hence, the perceived cultural differences in teaching and learning on the 'student-teacher relationship' that results in 'didactic' teaching style does not appear to be dominant at the HKWBLC; because as reported by the research, 100% of module tutors and 82% of the advisers/supervisors adopted a 'facilitative' teaching style respectively. This should not seem to be a major obstacle but requires time for the students to make the adjustment. Both the students and tutors are using an adult learning approach in the teaching and learning of WBL programmes, which is an appropriate and enjoyable learning process for the mature learners as reported by the interviewed students.

WBL uses different kinds of teaching and learning strategies. The tutors must fully understand and grasp the learning objectives and outcomes of the WBL cores modules, and each core module requires using different learning strategies to facilitate learning. There should be more training and development for the tutors to enhance their social constructivist learning approach and instructional techniques. There is a close relationship between reflection and learning, and the HK students are not used to undertaking the constant critical reflections required in the WBL programme, and as one UG student observed, it takes time to adapt to it. However, the CHC also promotes the idea of reflective learning, which is congruent with the western notion of reflection embedded in the WBL.

In Table 5.2 below, I use Wang's (2006) summarised Confucian Conceptions of Education and Learning and relate these conceptions to the WBL Approaches on Education and Learning

Confucian Conceptions	*WBL Approaches*
Significance of Education/Learning Personal improvement and social development	Benefits and Values of WBL Personal and professional development, and improvements in organisation learning and community of practices
Educability for All Education for all and everyone is educable	Inclusiveness of WBL Learning can occur inside or outside the classroom, and professional practitioners can use the APEL claim to gain credits for entry to HE
Learning, Efforts, Will Power, and Human Perfectibility The attainability of human perfectibility is through effort, and willpower being the driving force of effort	WBL's Concept on Continuous Improvements Critical reflections and continuous learning are the keys to continuous improvements on practices and CPD
Learning for Self-actualisation Learning is for the sake of one's self, the concept of self-cultivation to achieve self-actualisation	WBL and Professional Development It is the professional practitioner's responsibility to perfect his or her practice
Promoting Reflection and Enquiry Education is important for its intrinsic value which is inclined toward inner mental activity and self-search inquiry	WBL, Reflection and Critical Inquiry New knowledge and insights are acquired through critical inquiry and reflection
Achievement Motivation in Learning Education and learning have extrinsic and utilitarian value.	WBL is directly applicable in the learners' professional career and these should be useful and motivating to the learners.

Table 5.2: Comparisons between the Confucian and the WBL Approach on Education and Learning

It can be seen from Table 5.2 that the Confucian conceptions and the WBL approach on education and learning are convergent and not divergent as they hold similar values and approaches. Though WBL has its distinctiveness in teaching and learning, it should not be regarded as alien to the CHC, and one can see the congruence between the two. It is therefore important to promote the positive aspects of WBL to the HK students and tutors, initiating them in understanding the characteristics and recognising the differences of WBL. There are two directions to address the cultural differences in teaching and learning of the so-called 'East' vs 'West' dichotomy. First, the HKWBLC can point out to the students and tutors that there are areas of congruence among the Confucian conceptions and WBL approach on education and learning, and the WBL approach is not incompatible to the CHC. Second, it is proposed to use Piaget's (1985) cognitive approach to learning to change the mindsets of students and tutors on the knowledge construction process. This may involve 'assimilating' the values and benefits of WBL to continuing HE, 'accommodating' WBL as a knowledge creation process, and 'equilibrating' WBL as a new mode of thought in teaching and learning. This would encourage the students and the advisers/supervisors to adapt and adopt WBL and embrace it.

Suitability

The suitability of the WBL learning approach to the HK professional practitioners relates to whether the programme can meet the needs of the WBL students, and what kinds of WBL teaching and learning strategies are being used in the teaching and learning process. The difficulties the WBL students encountered during their course of WBL studies may result in challenges to their progression in the WBL programme.

Needs of WBL Learners

When joining the WBL programme, professional practitioners may have several objectives that they would like to achieve, which include acquiring workplace and academic skills, obtaining degree qualification, and creating value and impact on their organisation.

Acquiring Workplace and Academic Skills

Both the students and tutors find that WBL is work-related and enables the students to acquire some of the major employability skills stated by the CBI (2010). This has been echoed by comments from the student representatives at the BoS that they had enhanced their English writing and research skills. However, most of the students still regard WBL as a traditional education programme in the transfer of knowledge rather than a self-discovery of knowledge. The tutors need to encourage the students to use the workplace as a source of knowledge creation to enhance their professional practices.

Obtaining a Degree Qualification

Many students regard continuing their higher education is a primary goal in joining the WBL programme because they want to get a degree qualification, which will help them in their professional and career development in HK. The WBL programme offers the working adult an opportunity to continue their HE and obtain the award of a degree certificate. This is the practical side of most HK adult learners as indicated in the survey findings and some of them may not have much interest in reviewing and reflecting on their professional practices. The tutors should emphasise this positive aspect of the WBL programme.

Values and Impact to Organisation

The undertaking of the WBL project may have an impact on the company, which will help the students' career progression. The view that WBL is an effective way of learning to facilitate the students to understand themselves better has been remarked by the module tutors. In HK, most of the students join the WBL programme of their own accord, and very few are being sponsored by their company. Since there are many benefits to the organisations, we should expand into the employers' market by launching the WBL corporate cohort programmes. Both the students and the tutors agree that the WBL programme is an effective and efficient mode of studies, as it incorporates the certificated learning and APEL of the

students, which makes the programme length shorter than the traditional education programme and relatively lower cost. However, some students and tutors remarked that the programme length is too short and does not give sufficient time for the students to study, learn, digest, and reflect; which makes it less enjoyable.

Teaching and Learning Approaches and Practices

Adult Learning and Self-directed Approach

The WBL programme uses an adult learning approach in its delivery that is suitable for HK working adults and they enjoy the adult learning approach. This means that the tutors need to be competent in facilitating the adult learning approach. The tutors need to facilitate discussions with and among the students, enabling them to share perspectives and generate learning. In addition, the tutors need to have professional experience, so they can share various case studies with the students and relate the authentic tasks and situations to learning. There should be plenty of discussions and sharing of experience between the tutors and the students, and among the students themselves. The selection of WBL tutors is important and should be based on their professional experience, facilitating approach, and helpful attitude to instill learning in the students. In addition, as indicated in Figure 4.8, 80% of students agree that the WBL programme is learner-centred; and in Table 4.13, more than 70% of the students claimed that ‘My achievement relates to how much I learn’. The adult learners enjoy managing the learning themselves, and this self-managed approach was found to be helpful to the learners.

Teaching and Learning Practices

WBL teaching is of a facilitative nature that uses authentic situations to elaborate on the learning, and the tutors are supportive to the adult learners. It is important to require the WBL tutors to possess substantial professional experience and be capable of sharing and discussing the industry cases with the students. It is also essential for the WBL tutors to be supportive and fully conversant with the adult learning approach and teaching practices. In addition, it is important to encourage peer learning and therefore, the programme team should help to set up peer learning groups for the students, creating group coursework for the students to increase their interactions and discussions among themselves.

Challenges

The challenge for the students undertaking the WBL programme mainly includes understanding the WBL concepts and its process; time management and self-discipline, and English language proficiency.

Understanding of WBL

The students do not have a good understanding of the WBL concepts and processes; therefore, they do not have a clear direction in their learning journey. Also, to some extent, some advisers/supervisors do not fully understand the WBL concepts and processes. Therefore, it is important for the HKWBLC to elaborate the WBL concepts and processes at the induction session. There should be more training and development for the tutors, and closer communication between the HK tutors and the UK module tutors to exchange WBL teaching and learning experience and share good practice.

Time Management and Self-discipline

It is always a challenge for the full-time worker to study on a part-time basis. The students need to balance their work, family, and study, which requires good time management. Furthermore, it is noted that the flexibility offered to students to defer their coursework submission may cause further time management problems. Some students suggest including time management as a subject in the WBL programme and inviting former WBL students to the induction session to share their time management techniques. Self-directed learning requires self-discipline and as mentioned by the interviewed students, this may pose challenges and demand good time management, spending sufficient time in reading and digesting the materials as one module tutor commented. WBL emphasises student-centred and self-directed learning that most of the HK students are not accustomed to. Despite the local students' high motivations for obtaining a degree qualification, self-discipline does not come naturally. As suggested by two interviewed module tutors, not everyone thrives in the flexible environments of the WBL programme, maybe only half of the students can manage in the self-directed learning environment as it requires the self-discipline to work according to schedule.

English Language Proficiency

Most students do not consider the English language is a huge barrier to their WBL studies but all tutors think that English language proficiency is a major problem for the HK students whose second language is. Interestingly, the expatriate module tutor thinks that it is not a big challenge, so long as the HK students have enough time to read and digest the materials, reflect on their professional practice, and sit down to write their thoughts and reflections in English. Writing ability is important to articulate reflective learning, and many HK students do not have good Academic English skills. Therefore training in this should be provided at the beginning of the programme and throughout the studies.

Suitability for Organisations

The interviews with the employers reveal that there are market opportunities for the development of the WBL programme to be incorporated into the employers' workforce development scheme, and the professional associations' CPD programmes for their members.

Organisation Requirements for WBL Tutor Qualities

Both employers and professional associations find it suitable to have the WBL programme, but they have high requirements on the tutors' quality in delivering the programme. The tutors need or have substantial professional and industry experience and preferably regional exposure, with consultancy competences and experience to facilitate the senior management people in the WBL programme.

Postgraduate WBL Programme

The WBL programme is flexible and can incorporate popular topics quickly into the programme to suit the fast-changing business world. Because most of the employees/members would have an undergraduate degree qualification already, it is more appropriate to target the WBL programme at the master's level. The corporate cohort in the WBL programme has huge market potentials but with higher requirements for its tutor quality may mean that the HKWBLC needs to re-train existing tutors or recruit tutors with the required qualities to serve the corporate market.

Professional Insights

The WBL programme adopts an adult learning approach that is suitable for HK professional practitioners. The WBL tutors use discussions and sharing of industry experiences with the students to facilitate learning. There may be challenges for the WBL tutors, who may not come from a particular industry. However, the tutors need to be able to facilitate the students to provide authentic tasks and cases for discussions. The WBL programme is an efficient mode of learning and cost-effective, as it takes into account the students' prior certificated and un-certificated learning. However, it does require sufficient time for the students to reflect on their practices for improvements. The emphasis on reflective learning may be contrary to the teaching style and learning style of the students' past traditional education programme. To enhance the students' reflective learning, it is suggested to ask the students to write a reflective journey in future WBL programmes.

There are two ways that WBL students can create knowledge; generally, they can enhance their workplace knowledge through discussions and sharing of perspectives with the tutors and peers; specifically, they can create knowledge through research at their workplace. The primary goals of most of the WBL students who join the programme are for degree qualification rather than self-development and enhancement of professional practice The tutors need to address this kind of tendency and emphasise the other benefits of the WBL programme so that the students can become autonomous learners and reflective practitioners. Furthermore, the students need to be aware of the enhancement of professional practice and development that the WBL programme studies may bring, plus the WBL project undertaking which creates an impact on the company and results in career development for the students.

Regarding the challenge of time management, HKWBLC can put the learning materials online to enable the students to do the pre-reading in advance and encourage the students to use an online platform for discussions. It was reported by the students interviewed that adult learners prefer more group coursework and projects. HKWBLC should consider designing some of the assignments into group work that stimulates peer learning. Self-directed learning poses issues of self-discipline for some students. As two module tutors commented, perhaps as many as half of the students in HK are not suitable for this type of learner autonomy that

requires a high degree of self-discipline. Therefore, we will need to have a careful screening procedure in the admission of WBL students to find out their self-managed learning inclination in their personal statement at the application stage. The WBL programme is not designed as a 'one size fits all' programme and we need to inform the students at the information session and induction on its characteristics and requirements for self-discipline and good time management, so they can decide whether the WBL programme is suitable for them.

Regarding English language proficiency, although English is used as the medium of instruction, it is suggested that when it comes to discussion and there is no expatriate student in the classroom, the students can use their native language for discussion and presentation of ideas, which would encourage the exchange of ideas and learning.

The HK people are very practically-oriented so 'suitability' is more important than teaching and learning practices; if they are not practical, there is no point for them to adapt the particular learning approaches and teaching practices as remarked by a PG student. As indicated in the interview, HK professional practitioners are very practically-oriented, and they can easily adapt to a different teaching and learning styles such as that of WBL. However, it will take time for the adjustment, after which, the students will adopt the new teaching and learning styles, and 'enhancements' in the teaching and learning will follow.

Enhancements

The enhance measures mainly relate to recognition and promotion, programme structure, teaching and learning in delivery, and learning support that would help the students and advisers/supervisors to adapt to the WBL teaching and learning practices.

Recognition and Promotion

There are various open comments from the respondents in the questionnaire, which suggests that it is important for the tutors and students to understand the characteristics and recognise the differences of the WBL programme, and related promotions

Recognising and Understanding WBL

This may require a paradigm shift for the students and tutors to recognise that there is knowledge at the workplace and WBL is a mode 2 knowledge. On the other hand, the students are concerned that there is a lack of understanding of the WBL programme and insufficient recognition by the government and employers. Therefore, the University and HKWBLC need to promote the concept and values of the WBL programme to the major stakeholders.

Promotion of WBL

The tutors agree that recognition and promotion are necessary to attract more potential students to study the WBL programme. Both the tutors and students, suggest that we need to promote the benefits and impact of the WBL programme to the community, government, industry, employers, and professional associations, and obtain proper recognition and accreditation from the government and professional associations.

Teaching and Learning in Delivery

There are several suggestions on enhancing teaching and learning in the delivery of WBL in the research, which include using authentic tasks and relevant context, and a constructivist approach.

Authentic Tasks and Relevant Contexts

WBL uses the adult learning approach, which requires authentic tasks and cultural relevance, and the students suggest the inclusion of local business cases such as using the Asian context approaches to the subject discipline of coaching. The tutors also suggest students undertake a SWOT analysis, relating to their work role, professional learning and development, industry

and career development. It is noted that the HK professional practitioners are accustomed to the traditional teaching and learning style, which may be contrary to the teaching and learning of the WBL processes. Therefore, there is a need to change the pedagogic paradigm of the students, and to a certain extent, some of the tutors' mindset.

Constructivist Approach to WBL

WBL adopts a constructivist approach for the learners to discover knowledge and construct the social meaning of the learning. Therefore, the tutors need to adopt a facilitative approach encouraging interactions in discussions and sharing of experience. Tutor quality is important, and they need to be aware of the facilitative nature in the discussion and sharing of experience. It is also important that during the tutors' induction, training and development sessions, the constructivist approach to WBL should be re-visited.

Programme Structure

The suggested enhancements regarding programme structure include more elaboration of WBL concepts and the re-sequencing of modules.

Elaboration of WBL Concepts

It is noted that many of the WBL students and some advisers/supervisors do not understand the characteristics of WBL or recognise the values and impact of the WBL teaching and learning process. It is important to emphasise these at an extended induction when commencing the programmes, during which, the tutors should emphasise to the students that the Confucian and WBL conceptions of education and learning are similar, and there should not be much of a cultural difference between the two. In addition, the tutors should initiate the students to WBL by means of a constructivist cognitive approach changing the students' traditional education programme mindset so that they can adapt to the WBL teaching and learning and adopt it.

Re-sequencing of the Modules

Many students find it difficult to do the 'Programme Planning' module as they are asked to identify a possible project area and develop the working title of the WBL project. It would be

difficult for them without any prior teaching inputs in the ‘Research Methods’ module. Students request scheduling the Research Methods before the Programme Planning module as reflected in the BoS minutes, year after year. The programme team cannot find a satisfactory solution to this problem because it is a design defect, and nothing much can be done to improve it, except giving the students an additional session and time to prepare the Programme Planning coursework.

Support

According to the students and tutors, learning support can be enhanced in the following areas: handout of course materials, clear module handbooks, provisions of academic English, better use of tutor feedback, enhanced induction, use of social media and an online platform for learning support.

Handout of Course Materials and Clear Module Handbooks

Unlike traditional education programmes, there are no standard textbooks for the WBL programme. Therefore, students suggest having more handouts or course materials. The tutors can identify relevant reading materials and concepts and ask students to read these before joining the tutorial discussions. It is also reported by the students that some of the module handbooks are not clear, and difficult to read and follow. One of the module tutors also finds it difficult to read and understand the objectives and learning outcome of the module. Another module tutor finds the Research Methods module handbook unclear, because a colleague in London had revised the coursework requirements, but without updating the learning objectives and outcomes.

Provisions of Study Skills and Academic English Courses

Both the students and tutors find it useful to provide Study Skills and Academic English sessions to prepare the students to pursue HE studies and enhance their academic writing in the WBL programme. It is suggested to provide Study Skills sessions that include literature search, referencing, note-taking and time management techniques in the extended induction, and Academic Writing sessions during the students’ first semester of studies.

Feedback and Learning Support

The expatriate module tutor finds that there is too much support offered to the students, and she thinks that learning support is over-resourced. It would be more beneficial to the students' learning if they would carefully read the tutors' feedback and revise the draft coursework accordingly. It would be important for the tutors to provide constructive formative feedback to the students' draft coursework and ask the students to study the feedback for future improvements.

More Use of Social Media

There are quite a few responses from the students on using more social media and the online platform for peer discussions and learning. These include creating 'Facebook' where the students can discuss, setting up chat groups for discussing queries, using the online platform to download teaching resources and learning materials, and the use of 'WhatsApp' as a group communication tool.

Professional Insights

With regard to recognising and understanding WBL, I suggest that we can use the induction session to show the students that there are congruences in the Confucian conceptions and WBL approach to education and learning. We can then apply Piaget's Cognitive approach (1985) to change the mindset of the students to facilitate them to adapt to the WBL concepts and teaching and learning processes. Once, the students see the value of the workplace as a source of knowledge creation that offers opportunity for researching, reviewing, and reflecting their own practices, which lead to personal, professional and organisation (through undertaking of WBL project) developments, they should embrace WBL.

Due to its technical nature, the Cognitive Apprenticeship (CA) model was not presented to the respondents of the survey. However, I observe that most of the WBL pedagogical features such as work-based, feedback, learning support, review, reflection, and autonomous learning resonate with the instructional methods of the CA model. Spector (2016, p.114) associates six general instructional methods with cognitive apprenticeship:

1. Modelling - the teacher or expert models or demonstrates the desired knowledge and skill for the student; this is typically necessary with new learners in a domain and can be repeated at various learning stages.
2. Coaching - the teacher observes the student's performance and provides feedback aimed at helping the learning improve and become aware of specific aspects requiring improvement.
3. Scaffolding - the teacher deploys various support mechanisms for students; these typically become less explicit and less supportive as learners gain competence and confidence.
4. Articulation - the teacher encourages the student to talk about what he or she is doing or knows with regard to a particular task; this can occur at many points in an instructional sequence.
5. Reflection – the teacher encourages the student to compare his or her response to a problem situation with that of an expert or possibly with that of another student as a way to draw attention to differences for purposes of developing understanding and insight.
6. Exploration – the teacher provides students with opportunities to explore new problems and perhaps different types of problems requiring alternative problem-solving strategies.

Since the Constructivist Learning theories are appropriate approaches to the facilitation of WBL it is proposed to add several learning theories to the tutors' induction session. These include the Cognitive approach (Piaget 1985), Cognitive Cultural approach (Vygotsky (1978), and Cognitive Apprenticeship Instructional Techniques (Collins, Brown, & Newman (1989). It is further suggested that the tutors should be encouraged to use the Cognitive Learning approach to change the mindset of the students to adapt to the WBL teaching and learning practices, and Cognitive Apprenticeship instructional techniques to enhance the facilitation of WBL.

Throughout the BoS minutes over the years, we can see similar problems being raised by the student representatives repeatedly. This may due to some of the issues we could not solve as it was designed in the existing programme structure or because the students did not fully understand the WBL teaching and learning processes. In the future, we will strengthen the induction session to enable the students to have a better understanding of the WBL concepts,

theoretical underpinnings, learning objectives and outcomes, and assessment criteria. The delivery of the WBL programme in HK always requires extra support for the students. This may mainly be due to their lack of understanding of the WBL teaching and learning processes. This kind of support tends to be excessive as whenever the students encountered learning difficulties, the programme team will tend to provide additional support in the form of free extra tutorials and personal face-to-face feedback. I tend to agree with the expatriate module tutor that there is excessive support and the students did not use the support effectively, especially on the tutors' formative feedback. However, I think we need to expand the induction session and change its format for the students and the tutors, ensuring that they can understand the characteristics and recognise the differences of the WBL programme.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter will use ‘formulation’ as a framework suggested by Corrie and Lane (2010) to draw conclusions and put forward recommendations from the research discussions and interpretations.

The formulation comprises three core components:

- Purpose
  This relates to the purpose of this research

- Perspectives
  These relate to the perspectives of the major stakeholders and their beliefs about how changes occur, my own perspectives, and perspectives affected by the contexts.

- Process
  This involved deciding on the process and what intervention strategies and methods to be used.

Conclusions

Purpose

The purpose of this research project was to examine the teaching and learning issues of the WBL(MU) Programme at the HKWBLC and explore relevant enhancement measures in the pedagogical practices of its local delivery.

Perspectives

The research project explores the delivery of the WBL(MU) programme at the HKWBLC, which is a case study in the HK context. There are cultural differences in teaching and

learning in the CHC region such as HK, which affect the perspectives of the students and tutors of the local WBL programme. The major stakeholders in the study, include the students, tutors, organisations, the University, and me as the researching professional. Inevitably, each party brings their own perspectives into the research through responding to the questionnaires and interviews, and during the data collection and interpretation stages.

WBL students, who are professional practitioners and adult learners, would prefer learning that is relevant to their workplace, with authentic tasks, conducted in an interactive way, and with extensive discussion and sharing of ideas in the learning process (Knowles, 1985; Rogers 1969). Most importantly, they prefer to learn in an efficient manner that will allow them to continue their HE, making an impact on their professional and career development (Lester & Costley 2010).

The WBL tutors, on the other hand, would like to provide a facilitative learning approach (Roger 1969) that enables the students to learn effectively, understanding the WBL learning objectives and assessment requirements, preparing well in the assignments, and achieving good academic performance.

The organisations, who may be interested in incorporating the WBL programme into their employee development/CPD programmes, would like to have their employees/members joining the programme to learn up-to-date knowledge and theories in their industries, producing impactful WBL projects, enhancing their professional practice, and making further contributions of their WBL knowledge to the company/profession. (Penn, Nixon & Shewell 2005). As two interviewees commented, the organisations would like to have high-quality WBL tutors, who can use real business cases to illustrate learning, with consultancy backgrounds and regional exposure.

From the MU's perspective, they would like to provide an excellent programme such as the award-winning WBL(MU) programme to their students, which is relevant to industries and professional practices, with a student-centred philosophy, and engaging teaching and learning strategies (Middlesex University Strategic Plan 2012 – 2017; Middlesex University Academic Strategy 2015 – 2017). In addition, MU would like to extend its academic influence globally, expanding international operations overseas with the WBL programmes to achieve international excellence.

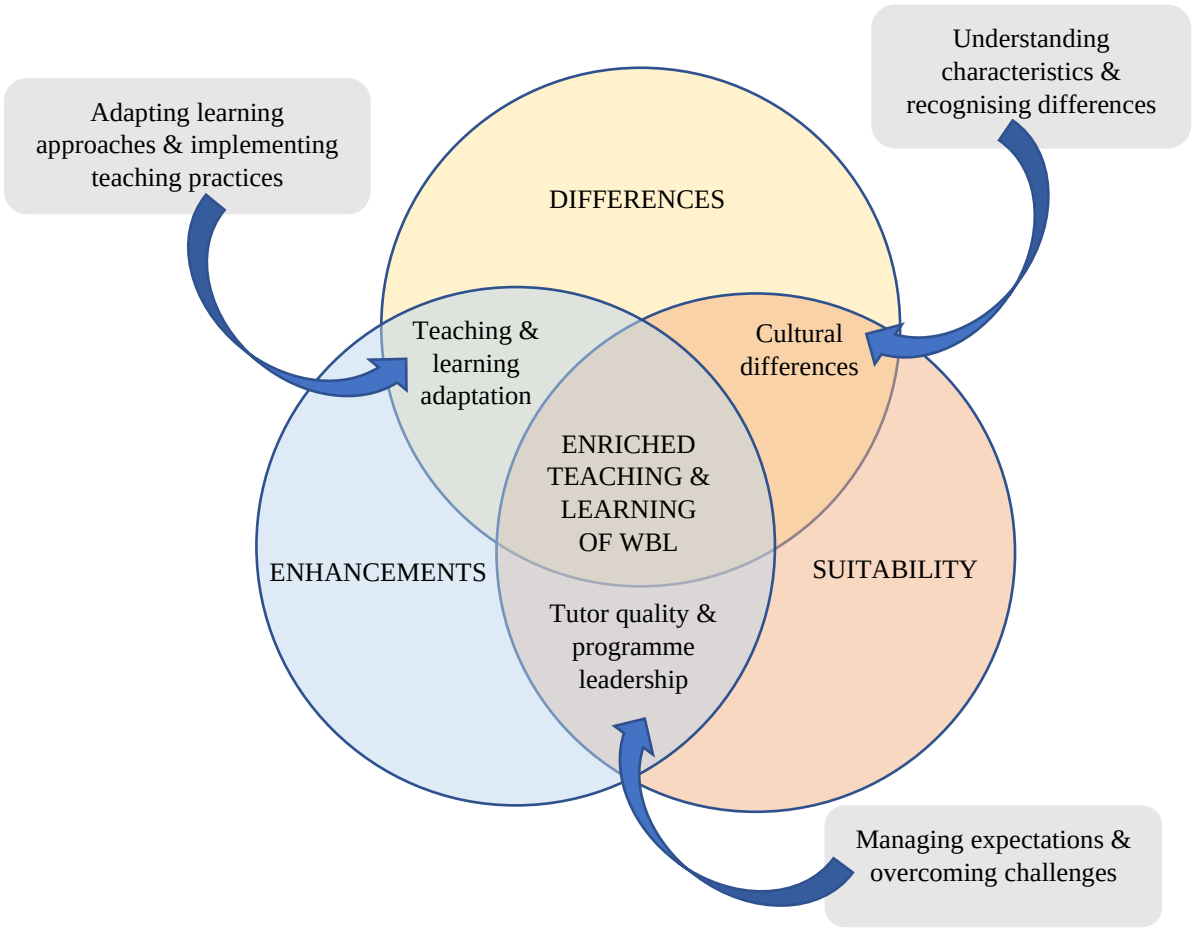
As a practitioner-researcher, I adopted an interpretive and exploratory approach to conducting my research, and I am fully aware that my research undertaking was influenced by my background and research paradigm. Hence, I needed to apply self-reflexivity throughout the research process. As the programme leader of the WBL programme in HK, I would like to examine the teaching and learning issues of the delivery of the programme in HK and suggest enhancement measures to enrich the teaching practices of the tutors and learning support to the students.

Above-all, WBL is different from traditional education and/or in-class programmes (Resnick 1987; Gibbon, et. Al. 1994; Tynjala 2007; MacLean, MacIntosh & Grant 2002), and there is a need for the students and tutors to understand its characteristics and recognise its difference, to fully explore the learning potentials of the WBL programme (Boud & Solomon 2001). This requires a change of mindset from the WBL students and tutors in HK.

Processes

Figure 6.1 below shows the processes in the research, which cover the major research objectives: namely *'difference'*, *'suitability'*, and *'enhancements'* of the WBL programme delivered in HK. The overlapping areas result in tensions which require the following interventions of strategies, methods, and tools:

Figure 6.1 Suggested Intervention Strategies and Methods



Understanding Characteristics and Recognising Differences

This is the first area of tension that calls for awareness of cultural differences, relating to the 'programme differences' in the WBL programme compared to the traditional education programme. WBL has several characteristics and different theoretical underpinnings in its teaching and learning processes that are not fully understood by WBL students and by some advisers/supervisors. In general, the students are aware of WBL's benefits but do not really understand and buy-in to the concept that WBL is a mode 2 knowledge (Gibbon 1998) that requires a paradigm shift in its teaching and learning (Garnett 2016).

When delivering a western WBL programme to a CHC region like HK, there are 'cultural differences' in teaching and learning in several ways: teaching style, learning style, student-

teacher relationship, and student-participation. These require the students and the tutors to re-frame their mindset to one that is relevant and appropriate to the WBL teaching and learning processes. In fact, there are precedents in Confucian ideas of learning and practices; and Confucius' views of lifelong learning and reflection for continuous improvements that are not incompatible with the WBL concepts and processes. Therefore, WBL is not totally foreign to the HK students but requires re-contextualisation as Evan, Guile, and Harris (2009) suggested.

Managing Expectations and Overcoming Challenges

This is the second area of tension that calls for the intervention of 'tutor quality & programme leadership'. This relates to whether the WBL programme is a suitable learning approach for HK professional practitioners. Currently, the WBL tutors and programme leader are providing extensive support that focuses on preparing the students to complete the coursework to meet the assessment criteria. The students have their aim of continuing their HE and pursuing a practically-oriented programme that enhances their professional and career development, in an efficient mode of study. There are some challenges for WBL students in relation to their English language proficiency, time management, and self-directed learning mode.

Managing Expectations

The tutors and the programme leader are required to manage the students' expectations. Though the WBL programme may meet most of the students' needs as a professional practitioner, they should be aware that the WBL programme is as rigorous as other traditional education programmes, and the students should put enough effort and time into studying and reflecting on their practices to enhance their professional practices and development. It is not a short-cut in the quest for knowledge. In addition, the students need to change their learning style to one of self-directed learning and spend enough time in reading and digesting learning materials for discussions and sharing for construction of social knowledge with tutors and peers.

Tutor Quality and Programme Leadership

Despite the incomplete understanding and recognition of the differences in the WBL programme, the HKWBLC managed to produce hundreds of WBL graduates over the years. This has been partly due to the quality of the tutor and programme leadership, and partly due to the students' hard work and eagerness to complete the degree programme. The HK tutors possess helpful attitudes and dedication to provide care to the students and are willing to work extra time to facilitate students' learning. The programme leader also provides leadership in the teaching and learning of the WBL programme, assuring quality throughout the programme' delivery, and acting responsively to the feedback provided by the students in the BoS minutes. Currently, the tutors and the programme leader are taking reactive measures to respond to the students' feedback in the BoS minutes. As indicated in Chapter 4 t there were some recurring issues raised in the BoS minutes over the years, which would require short-term actions, and future medium-term actions to remedy. This was an important part of my research for me personally and professionally because it helped to separate what was successful or not about the programme and the reasons. The Board of Studies were over a five-year period which gave me the opportunity to see what I was responsible for and what I could do to improve things. I believe the contribution I can make now after this research will help me make the most effective improvements. I have been convinced there was a cultural reason for why many students might struggle and why there is not a substantial uptake by local organisations. With regards to the former point I think there is a cultural issue but one of an approach to learning culture rather than an ethnic culture. With regards to the latter point this is because Middlesex University does not devote resources to showcasing and recruiting in a way that speaks to our markets. Now that is an organisational cultural issue again not an ethnic one.

Overcoming Challenges

Academic Skills and English Support

These had always been a problem to the HKWBLC because we operate off-campus and could not afford to have the in-campus service of academic skills and English support. We do not have an extended induction session to incorporate the essential learning on academic skills and Academic English enhancement for the local part-time students. In addition, most of the

WBL students have been away from college for a while, and the English language is their second language so they require the acquisition of the academic skills and English before and during WBL studies.

Time Management

All WBL students are working professionals and they are faced with various demands, including work, family, and studies. Effective time management is important in successful part-time adult learning. The WBL students, in fact, had more difficulties than the usual part-time adult students, because they need to negotiate with their supervisor and management on using worthy tasks and/or issues for learning discussions and project undertakings. This has been reflected by several students interviewed that they would like to include 'time management' in the induction and invite WBL alumina to the induction session to share how they managed their time.

Self-directed Learning

Self-directed learning is another important issue facing the CHC students as they are dependent on the teacher as a source of knowledge (Haller, Fisher & Gapp 2007). Despite its social learning nature, WBL requires individual students to review their learning needs and develop their learning to meet professional development. We operate WBL in an off-campus environment so students need to study independently while maintaining close contacts with their tutors at a distance when not attending the evening tutorials. It is important for the HKWBLC to enable the students to acquire the self-directed learning approach and methods and provide enough support on access to and training on e-resources, formal communication channels and frequent contacts with tutors, peer support schemes and study skills sessions (Higher Education Academy 2017).

Adapting Learning Approaches and Implementing Teaching Practices

This is the third area of tension that calls for intervention for 'adapting approaches and implementing practices'. This relates to the enhancements of the delivery of the WBL programme in HK, which cover the WBL approaches to learning, programme structure, programme delivery, and teaching and learning support.

WBL Approaches to Learning

WBL students and to a lesser extent tutors do not fully understand the WBL concepts, which require more clarification from the programme team, and the programme leader. These may require the use of a cognitive constructivist approach in re-framing the students' and the tutors' CHC learning and teaching mindsets to a Western (WBL) teaching and learning style. This can be achieved at the induction sessions for the students and tutors respectively by using the cognitive learning approach, aiming at re-contextualising the participants' paradigms on learning and teaching; moving and progressing them from 'assimilation' to 'accommodation' of the WBL approaches to learning, and finally to arrive at an 'equilibrium' state, fully recognising the WBL differences. It is important for the major stakeholders to have full understanding and recognition of the WBL characteristics and 'differences' to capitalise on the potentials of WBL in HK and to emphasise the use of a constructivist approach to WBL teaching and learning.

Facilitation of WBL and Programme Structure

The WBL teaching and learning is based on several pedagogical strategies; i.e. the core WBL modules. Both the tutors and students need to be aware of the learning objectives and the outcomes of the core WBL modules. Facilitation of WBL will be focused on the following learning; reflective learning, self-directed learning and capability, learning on epistemology for knowledge and research methods and WBL research awareness, and problem-based learning. There may be a need for re-sequencing some of these WBL core modules, as students find it difficult to go into identifying an appropriate research area and formulating a working WBL project title at the programme planning stage without prior research knowledge and skills. This calls for the development of a new WBL programme, which will be elaborated later.

Teaching and Learning Support

Tutor quality is a critical success factor, and the tutors need to possess the correct mindset, relevant academic and professional knowledge, constructivist facilitative skills, and supportive and caring attitude in effective teaching and learning of WBL. These require better induction and training and development for tutors, workshops to brush-up their constructivist teaching methods, and additional sharing and communications among the tutors. Other teachings and learning enhancements include more hand-outs of course materials, clearer

module handbooks, better use of formative feedback by students, and better induction for students.

In summary, the WBL programme is an appropriate learning approach for HK professional practitioners as it provides a relevant and impactful learning approach for adult learners. However, the student's expectations need to be managed and related learning support provided for the students, helping them to overcome challenges. The enhancement measures are targeted at the WBL approaches to learning, facilitation of WBL and programme structure-resequencing, and provision of teaching and learning support. The research shows that there are some blind spots; for the past 20 years of WBL delivery and operations in HK, we might still have been using part of the traditional approaches in the WBL programme's teaching and learning. However, the HKWBLC managed to produce high numbers of WBL graduates due to its extensive tutors' support and students flexibly adopting an adult learning approach towards WBL. Looking back, the transference of WBL programme to HK and its related operations did not go through much detailed or careful deliberations and planning. The HKWBLC is more 'sales-oriented' and interested in building partnerships and getting more students onto the WBL programmes. Not enough time was spent on overcoming cultural differences in teaching and learning and enhancing the WBL pedagogical issues, encouraging and facilitating the students to adapt to the WBL self-directed learning approach on creating knowledge at the workplace through reflections on practices and the role of a researching practitioner.

Recommendations

In general, the recommendations would address the following major stakeholders and areas:

University

The award-winning WBL programme is a signature programme of MU. The programme was developed some 25 years ago and has now become popular and well known for its relevance and effectiveness in a knowledge economy that requires upskilling. The University needs to

promote this excellent programme more effectively on its website, brochures and other recruitment materials for international stakeholders to grasp the importance of it and its evidenced impact. If the University wishes to continue its international influence, the promotion and expansion of WBL overseas would be an appropriate strategy.

IWBL/Work and Learning Research Centre

In 2006, the IWBL was designated as the Centre of Excellence for WBL and such a prestigious position needs to be maintained. Since its closure and dissemination across faculties mainly in the form of apprenticeships, it is important to maintain a focus and locus to concentrate the efforts for research and development in what is now known as the Work and Learning Research Centre which sits in the School of Education. This centre can continue its research to inform learning at work practices serving as a centre of excellence in developing new forms of WBL programmes, underpinning any new tutor training and development in the UK and internationally.

HKWBLC

This research has identified a huge market potential for WBL programmes in Hong Kong and elsewhere to help organisations, develop their workforce potential including CPD programmes as indicated by the employers and professional associations' response to the survey and interviews. Postgraduate WBL programmes will be more appropriately targeted for the corporate cohort market and for the employees/members of the organisation with undergraduate qualifications. However, organisations require high-quality tutors to introduce and run such programmes.

Programme

For any university or HEIs in HK, other countries, or private organisations in the region the findings of this research would be very useful. As suggested by the research, there are some

shortcomings of the existing WBL (MU) programme; hence, there are rationales for proposing a new WBL programme:

- There is no separate and extended induction session to brief students on the characteristics of WBL
- The students and the tutors do not have thorough understanding and recognition of the WBL concepts and processes
- There may be cultural differences in teaching and learning of WBL
- There is a lack of academic skills provisions on academic writing and literature review
- There is no inclusion of certain workplace skills such as 'IT' and 'Numeracy'
- There is insufficient coverage on practitioner research skills

Table 6.2-1 Proposed New WBL Programme

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">1. Induction</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">1.1 Basic concepts on work-related learning
Add WBL and Workplace Skills (including 'Managing Data' to replace 'IT' and "Numeracy'
1.2 Introduction to the programme administration and programme team
1.3 Learning needs, challenges, and support
1.4 How professional practitioners learn and develop?
1.5 Construction of knowledge
1.6 Cultural differences in teaching and learning of WBL</td></tr>
<tr><td>Confucius' Conceptions on Education</td><td>WBL Approaches to Education</td></tr>
<tr><td>Significance of education for personal and social development</td><td>Value, benefits and impact of WBL practice and knowledge</td></tr>
<tr><td>Educability for all</td><td>Inclusiveness in HE</td></tr>
<tr><td>Learning for human perfectibility through efforts and will power</td><td>Learning for perfecting the professional practice</td></tr>
<tr><td>Learning for self-actualisation</td><td>Continuous improvements</td></tr>
<tr><td>Promoting reflection and enquiry</td><td>Use of reflection and critical inquiry</td></tr>
<tr><td>Education and learning have its utilitarian value</td><td>WBL is practical knowledge</td></tr>
</table>

(3 weekends x 6 hours = 18 hours)

2. WBL Concepts, Skills and Practices

2.1 Understanding of knowledge and learning

2.2 WBL characteristic, concepts and processes

2.3 Adult learning, organisational learning, and social learning

2.4 Reflection skills

2.5 Academic writing and literature reviews

2.6 Practitioner research skills

(4 weekends x 6 hrs = 24 hours)

3. Conceptualisation of Practice

3.1 Expanding knowledge and skills in practice

3.2 Review of practice-based learning

(*1st core WBL module: Review of Learning)*

3.3 Learning and reflection

3.4 APEL Accreditation of Experiential Prior Learning

- Using frames to present learning; e.g. knowledge, skills and attitude
- Mapping the learning to different academic levels
- Adopting 'schema' to present different types/levels of learning

3.5 Professional development - concepts and skills

(4 weekends x 6 hrs = 24 hours)

4. Workplace issues and professional practices and development

4.1 Analysing workplace contexts and issues

4.2 Self-directed learning and planning professional development

(*2nd core WBL module – Planning Programme)*

(3 weekends x 6 hrs = 18 hours)

----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ------- 4.3 Epistemology of knowledge 4.4 Being a practitioner researcher *(3rd WBL core module – Professional Practitioner Inquiry)* (5 weekends x 6 hrs = 30 hours) ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ---- ---- --------- 4.5 Solving workplace problems 4.6 Aligning professional development and organisational development *(4th core WBL module – Negotiated WBL Project)* (5 weekends x 6 hrs = 30 hours)
5. Professional Profiling
(1) Reflective learning in the WBL process (2) Consolidating work experience and learning (3) Applying learning to current and future uses (4) Developing professionally and continuously (1 weekend x 6 hrs = 6 hours) The student should compile a professional profile of 3 - 4 pages that include the above. Only PASS or FAIL grade

Programme Leader and WBL Tutors

The programme leader shall receive a clear job description and sufficient training and development opportunities to become a conversant leader in the WBL programme. It is crucial for all tutors to understand the characteristics and recognise the differences in the WBL programme. It is also suggested to use the 'Cognitive Constructivist' approach to re-frame the mindsets of the tutors to adapt to the cultural differences in teaching and learning of the WBL programme. There should be frequent training and development workshops for the local WBL tutors, which can be conducted by visiting UK colleagues, or via Skype. It is

noted that the organisations would expect a high level of quality from the WBL tutors, and the HKWBLC need to train up the type of tutors who have senior management experience, regional and consultancy backgrounds to become project supervisors that cater for the corporate cohorts. Group learning and frequent interactions and sharing of experience among the WBL tutors are useful learning opportunities, which should be promoted.

The IWBL developed a Guide for WBL Tutor (Costley 2010) to facilitate WBL but not yet launched. I would like to suggest an enhanced version of the Guide for WBL Tutor for delivery of WBL programme in Hong Kong and the Asia Pacific region. When delivered overseas, there needs to emphasise on the cultural differences in WBL and teaching and learning. This would include the following recommended enhancements:

(1) An additional module on 'Cultural Differences in WBL and Teaching and Learning' - Module 1

(2) A revised module on 'Teaching Strategies and Facilitation of WBL' that strengthens the facilitation of WBL by adopting the 'Cognitive Constructivist' approach in changing paradigm of the participants on WBL, and the 'Cognitive Apprenticeship' teaching methods in facilitating the WBL core modules - Module 2

Table 6.2-2 Suggested Enhanced Guide for WBL Tutors

Module 1: Cultural differences in WBL and teaching and learning (Extra Module)
1.1 Cultural differences in teaching and learning in Confucius Heritage Culture • Didactic teaching vs. facilitative teaching style • Teacher-dependent vs. self-directed learning style • Student-teacher relationship • Student participation 1.2 Comparisons between the Confucian and the WBL approach on education and learning – convergent or divergent? 1.3 Cognitive constructivist learning approach • Assimilation • Accommodation • Equilibrium

Module 2: Developing Teaching and Facilitations of WBL (Costley's (2011) proposed module 2 with enhanced WBL facilitation strategies)	
2.1	Teaching methods
2.2	Teaching modes
2.3	Providing teaching materials and feedback
2.5	Learning management and support, and working with diversity
2.6	Use of social constructivist approach in the facilitation of WBL • Vygotsky's 'Zone of Proximation' (1987) • 'Cognitive Apprenticeship' Model's teaching methods (Collins et al, 1989) (Modelling, Coaching, Scaffolding, Articulation, Reflection & Exploration)
Module 3: Supporting Learning Original Module 2 proposed by Costley (2011)	
3.1	Learning style
3.2	Developing self-directed learning
3.3	Threshold pedagogic theory
3.4	Problem-based learning
3.5	Assessment for learning
3.6	Embedding e-learning
Module 4: Theory into Practice Original Module 3 proposed by Costley (2011)	
4.1	Programme design and module design
4.2	Assessment design
4.3	Providing feedback and support
4.4	Facilitating learning for diverse learners
4.5	Applying learning technologies
4.6	Undertaking work based research project

WBL Students

The research shows that many students find WBL different and require time to adjust. It is recommended that there should be a separate and enhanced induction session for the students so that they can acquire a clear understanding of WBL, which may require them to modify their concepts on cultural differences in teaching and learning. The students should be encouraged to adopt the constructivist approach to build their social knowledge in the WBL teaching and learning processes that emphasises participation. WBL uses the adult learning approach that requires self-directed learning, and such concepts should be instilled into the students.

Contributions to Practice and Knowledge

This research project provides an evidence-based and practice-oriented study on the delivery of the WBL(MU) programme in HK. I set out to examine the teaching and learning issues of the WBL(MU) programme at its HKWBLC and explore enhancement measures of the pedagogical practices that are more culturally relevant to the local WBL programme delivery. Though the research project is a case study of WBL of HK, it has provided broader perspectives to other areas that are of CHC (Watkins & Biggs 1996). The theories and concepts examined are globally applicable, and the research findings can offer a good analogy to other regions. The research is a contribution to those using WBL or a related approach as is the extensive literature review and the useful comparisons made between Confucian Heritage Culture and Western concepts on learning and teaching including the purposes of education. Additionally, there is the contribution available to other researchers of the empirical data and perspective analysis about how WBL(MU) was delivered in HK, and the major stakeholders' perspectives on the WBL(MU) programme. Also the value of using the constructivist approach to adapt the pedagogic paradigm of the students and tutors into the WBL approaches and the cognitive apprenticeship model's teaching methods to facilitate WBL. These all contribute to the thinking required for any higher education institute or training organisation when planning to set up hubs in the Asia Pacific region.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations are that it was a specific programme in a specific context that dealt with one version of the WBL programme. It would have benefited from more in-depth interviews. Although all care was taken as were mitigating actions, the researcher also held all the senior roles thereby possibly/unconsciously influencing responses, particularly with staff and students. Nonetheless, the findings should be useful to the WBL tutors and students who are interested in enriching their teaching and learning in the WBL(MU) programme in HK; and for the University that would be interested in delivering its WBL programme overseas.

7 A Reflective Account of My Personal Learning and Professional Journey

This final chapter consists of several sections. First, it reviews and reflects my objectives in studying a professional doctorate and my reasons for taking such a long time pursuing it. Second, it examines the essence of being a practitioner-researcher and reflexivity and the changing identities of the researching professional. Third, it analyses the use of reflexivity in the social construction of professional knowledge. Fourth, it reviews the major stages of research activity and the reflective learning derived from them. Fifth, it summarises the impact of doing the doctorate research on my professional practice and personal development.

Professional Doctorate and My Motivations for its Pursual

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) states that:

> "Professional doctorates aim to develop an individual's professional practice and support them in producing a contribution to (professional) knowledge"
>
> (ESRC, 2005: 93).

When I first joined the HKWBLC 16 years ago, I was offered the opportunity to undertake doctoral-level research after my initial two months of employment. I had no idea what a Doctor of Professional Studies (DProf) was but I took up the offer for professional development. At that time, I did not have sufficient relevant work experience to research my WBL professional practices, which is the reason it has taken me such a long period to complete my research. Sixteen years of WBL professional experience and practice might be the threshold for doctoral studies for someone who had a late-life change of career. This echoes Costley and Lester's (2012) finding that:

> 'the professional doctorate is targeted for mid- and later career practitioners who embark on doctorate programmes for purposes that can collectively be classified as a professional extension, including supporting a major development or change, taking forward a specific area of practice, consolidating and establishing recognition for an

> area of expertise, and setting out their credentials as a leading member of their profession or field'.
>
> Costley and Lester's (2012)

I am pursuing the DProf because I would like to consolidate my WBL professional practices and make contributions to the professional knowledge on enhancing teaching and learning and pedagogical practices of the Western WBL(MU) programme overseas.

Researching Professional and Identity

Bernard, Dragovic, and Ottewell (2018) suggest that the professional doctorate journey involves practitioner research that uses "critical reflexivity to move the practitioner to become a researching professional; and the placing of 'practice' at the nexus of the workplace, the university (doctorate programme) and leading professional change." (2018 pp 40). They state that researching professionals have a dual role of 'inside' practitioner and 'outside' researcher, critically examining the insider's 'practice', assumptions and values, generating an outsider's perspective on their own workplace, they develop identities that become multiple, flexible and changing. In the professional doctorate research, researching professionals need to challenge their self-understanding, practising critical reflexivity to engage the researching professional's understanding of subjectivity, inter-subjectivity, voice, representation and text, where reflexivity implies a deeper examination of underlying assumptions than merely reflective (p.42). They have noted three identities of the researching professional, transforming from being the practitioner (insider identity), through the researcher (the outsider identity) to the researching professional (the in-betweener identity). The positioning of the researching professionals keeps changing, intertwining in a continuum, progressing the researcher professional's 'doing' and 'studying', resulting personal change and development, not only encompassing the two identities, but transcending them into what Wenger (1998, p.151) suggests: 'the being of the world', which according to Burnard, Dragovic, and Ottewell (2018), is analogous to Aristotle's *phronesis*, practical wisdom that emerges from studying of practice.

Reflexivity in the Construction of Professional Knowledge

WBL a mode 2 knowledge that recognises there is a diversity of knowledge production sites and is argued to be transdisciplinary in nature (Gibbs, 2015). As Garnett (2009) suggests, WBL is a socially constructed knowledge, which is more appropriate using the interpretive lens with reflexivity as an approach.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity emphases the importance of self-awareness, political/cultural consciousness and ownership of one's perspective. To be reflexive is to undertake an on-going examination of what you know and how you know it. Reflexivity is an attitude of paying attention systematically to the context of knowledge construction, especially to the effect of the researcher throughout the research process. As Malterud (2001) suggests that "A researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions" (Malterud 2001, p. 483 - 484).

According to Anderson (2008), there are three types of reflexivity. Firstly, introspective reflexivity, which refers to the consciousness of the researcher to understand how his or her own experiential location might influence the choice of subject, methodology, and themes. These were examined in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3. Secondly, methodological reflexivity, which involves using the standardised procedures in conducting the research through regular monitoring and testing of assumptions and approaches so the researcher tries to establish the reality of the research (Dowling, 2006). Methodological reflexivity refers to identifying and examining the ethical, social and political considerations that govern the field of inquiry and I have analysed these in Chapter 3. Finally, epistemological reflexibility, which relates to how the research question has been defined and framed in the area of enquiry and how else it could have been examined apart from the current methodology. For instance, since I have a rich source of student data, I decided to undertake quantitative surveys for the 'breadth' and interviews from some major stakeholders for the 'depth' of research, as detailed in Chapter 3.

It is necessary to be reflexive, especially in undertaking qualitative research, because the perspective or position of the researcher shapes the research (both quantitative and qualitative). Kvale (2002) suggests that there exists "the asymmetrical power relations of the researcher interviewer and the interviewed subject" (Kvale, 2002: pp. 7-9). I have several power relations with the interviewees; for instance, my tutor-student relations with the students and my programme leader-tutor relations with the interviewed tutors. These power relations require me to be reflexive in gathering, presenting, analysing, and interpreting the interview data. Qualitative interviewing involves a continuous process of reflection on the research. Reflexivity is the process of examining both oneself as researcher, and the research relations. I am adopting an interpretative constructivist approach in the research, which means that all meanings are interactively and culturally constructed. The interview is one of such examples of interactive meaning-making that require reflection on interpretation.

Managing the DProf Progress

During the undertaking of the DProf research, I have encountered the following obstacles:

Finding an Appropriate Research Topic

The initial DProf topic was suggested by the former Academic Director of HKWBLC and was not my personal choice. This did not result in much motivation for me pursuing the research. Besides, I was new to the HE academic world and needed to put in a great deal of effort and time to catch up and become conversant with my academic roles and duties. Therefore, I did not do much research during my first 5 years of employment. It was not until I met with my current DProf Consultant (who was then my DProf Adviser) who asked me if there were issues or practices that I am passionate about investigating. We then discussed and jointly agreed on the 'Teaching and Learning and Pedagogical Practices of WBL Programmes in HK', which is closely related to my work roles and practices, making use of my positionality, enhancing my professional practice, strengthening my role as the programme leader, making impact to the HK WBL team, helping my professional development, and enriching teaching and learning of the HK WBL students.

Gathering Relevant Materials

I have been gathering the related research materials since joining the HKWBLC, as I was fascinated by the concept of WBL and wished to grasp a full understanding of the field. However, I found most of the materials were descriptive and generic, which may be due to WBL's evolving nature. There were not many theories underpinning WBL. I have gathered a large number of materials, including documents and papers from MU, IWBL, and HKWBLC because of my privileged position granting me access to information. It was not until I read some useful articles relating to different kinds of experiential learning, that I saw the explicit links between WBL and the constructivist approach to learning which some of the WBL tutors are unaware of, possibly due to a lack of induction and training from the University. This allowed me to pinpoint a research area, proposing to reinforce the 'constructivist' approaches to recognising the differences in WBL and focus on facilitating the individual WBL core module's learning. Without that cognitive awareness, the overseas students and tutors would not adapt their respective 'native' learning style and teaching style to a 'new' one that takes into consideration the cultural differences in teaching and learning of WBL.

Research Design and Data Collection

I opted for adopting both quantitative and qualitative approaches and applied the mixed methods and case study as my research approach together with the survey methodology, using questionnaires, interviews, and documents as data collection methods to give sufficient breadth and depth to the investigation. Initially, I was unfamiliar with analysing and reviewing my ontological stance and epistemological approach, and the research paradigms. Later, I learned that I needed to declare my bias, position, and methods of analyses and interpretations. With regard to sampling, I needed to offer a rationale to my DProf Adviser to convince her of my appropriate use of 'purposeful' sampling technique because I needed to explore the situation through communication with the respondents. I learned that in DProf research, I need to have a voice. The research sits outside the University and I am central to the investigation and the expert of the subject. In the online survey I devised, I was surprised that there were many rejected response because many students had changed their jobs or internet providers in the fast-paced HK social-economic environment. I also learned to use Google Forms to help me in the questionnaire survey, which facilitated the feedback and analyses for over 110 responses; and the support of NVivo to tabulate my nodes analyses of the interview data. On reflection, I realise that in the questionnaire design, I have put forward

too many questions, some of which may not fit in the correct groupings, and some of which may not be wholly relevant to the issue that I would like to investigate. For this reason, I gathered a large amount of quantitative data, which may be regarded as excessive, and that causes problems in the presentation and analyses.

I choose interviews as a data collection method because I have good relationships with the students. In general, they gave honest and direct answers to my semi-structured interview questions. When some of them realised that I am in the process of doing my doctoral research, they offered me encouraging words, because they note that I am practising what I peach as a lifelong learner in my late-life career, which is motivating. I found it difficult to formulate the interview questions because all of them needed to be open-ended questions and cannot be leading. To some extent this hampered my ability to draw the inner ideas and views from the interviewees. In addition, contrary to my own belief, I need to enhance my interview skills, as I did not probe the interviewees sufficiently and follow up on the initial responses provided by them.

Presenting and Analysing Data

The quantitative data analyses were facilitated by Google Forms with its tabulations of figures. However, it was more time-consuming for collecting the interview data. I needed to transcribe the taped interviews into texts and read them several times. After that, I needed to use thematic analysis to code them. These were very laborious and painstaking tasks that I needed to complete patiently. My resilience and hard work sustained me in completing these tasks. In addition, I am grateful to two WBL alumni who helped me as research assistant, introducing me to the powerful tools of Google Form and NVivo; one of them helped to code the questionnaire questions, and the other helped to generate and co-coded nodes in the NVivo tabulation.

Obtaining Support and Feedback

There were many tasks to learn, materials to read and digest and sometimes, there were some items that were difficult to understand. In these cases, I used the 'rote-reading' (Watkins & Biggs, 1996) method to increase understanding. I would also discuss with my peers and sometimes, I discussed the issues with my DProf Adviser and Consultant either through face-to-face meetings, Skype, or emails. I learned how to learn from the resource persons available. Interactions with my peers were rewarding, where they challenged my thoughts and assumptions; my paradigm of 'positivist' approach rather than an 'interpretative' in the social construction of professional knowledge. Discussions with my DProf Adviser and Consultant were inspiring, where they elevated my thought processes to a higher level and wider scope.

Managing Time

As I was doing my DProf on a part-time basis, like many other HE educators, I needed to work long hours. In my case, all my students are working adults, who come to tutorials after they had finished their work, so tutorials started at 7:00 pm and finished at 10:00 pm. Similarly, if they wanted to see me, we needed to meet during these late evening hours. I had other work to do during the daytime such as responding to emails, answering queries from students, and communicating with team members and partner institutions. Therefore, the only free time I had to do my research was on Saturday and Sunday. I used to go to the office during the weekends and found it quite enjoyable, as there were no interruptions. However, I needed to sacrifice my weekends and family time.

Developing Professionally and Personally

The ESRC (2005) document states that:

> "… the research conducted would be expected normally to involve 'real life' issues concerned with practice, often within the student's own organisation, and there would be an expectation that students' close interaction with professionally related problems through the process of their research would lead to opportunities for personal and

> professional development. The measure of this development would be expected to form part of the assessment for the doctorate award."
>
> ESRC (2005, p.93)

Professional Practice

The DProf has enabled me to use my positionality and dual roles of a practitioner researcher to undertake epistemology of practice in my workplace which has impacted positively on my professional practice and development, and personal development. My DProf research provided an evidence-based finding to inform practice and examined the various factors that would affect the teaching and learning of WBL programmes in HK. This leads to the development of a framework that provides relevant information to the following three major research objectives:

(1) Understanding characteristics and recognising differences of the WBL programme
(2) Managing professional practitioners' learning needs and providing support
(3) Adapting appropriate learning approaches for the students and implementing teaching practices for the tutors

The research highlighted the need for re-visiting and using the constructivist learning approach and related teaching practices for the delivery of the WBL programme, which called for formal induction for the WBL students and induction training for the WBL tutors. I have also examined the different objectives and concepts that underpinned different WBL cores modules of the WBL(MU) programme, which focused on facilitation on the following learning:

(1) Review of Learning - reflective learning
(2) Programme Planning – self-directed learning and capability
(3) Practitioner Inquiry – learning on epistemology of knowledge and practitioner research
(4) Practitioner-led project - problem-based learning
(5) Reflection/Reflexivity – critical reflective learning

Effective facilitation of the above core learnings will produce desirable learning from the students.

The undertaking of this DProf research has impacted my professional practices in several ways. It familiarised me with the WBL pedagogy and teaching and learning practices at a much deeper level and enabled me to establish my position in the WBL HE community of educational practitioners. It improved inductions for WBL learners and tutors. It changed the adaptations of learning approaches of the WBL students and enhanced teaching practices of the tutors in HK. It enriched WBL's interactive learning for the professional practitioners in HK and elevated me to one of the top WBL facilitators in this part of the world. It suggested appropriate types of WBL programme and tutors for organisations to incorporate WBL into their employee development/CPD programmes. It enabled me to collaborate with parties on research and/or other academic undertakings.

Personal Development

The undertaking of this DProf research has impacted my life practices in several ways. It helped me develop congruence between my personal and professional self and made me think differently about what matters and the value of research. I now see myself as a researching professional. I am more reflective and reflexive personally and professionally It has transformed me in a way that I cannot yet articulate.

It has been a very long journey.

‘We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.’

(TS Eliot)

‘Is it not a joy to be able to practise while learning?’

(Confucius)

Reference List

Articles and Books

Anderson, G. L. (2002). Reflecting on research for doctoral students in education. *Educational researcher*, *31*(7), 22-25.

Anderson, G.L. and Herr, K. (2009) Practitioner action research and educational leadership. In *The Sage handbook of educational action research.* Sage Publications, London, pp.155-165.

Anderson, L. (2008) Reflexivity. *The Sage dictionary of qualitative management research*, pp.183-5.

Argyris, C. (2006) Reasons and Rationalizations: the limits to organizational knowledge. London: Oxford University Press.

Argyris, C. & Schön, D. A. (1997). Organizational learning: A theory of action perspective. *Reis*, (77/78), 345-348.

Armsby, P. & Costley, C. (2000) "Research driven projects" In Portwood, D. & Costley, C. (Eds.) Work based learning and the university: new perspectives and practices. SADA Paper 109.

Ballamy, M. (2008) 'Work Based Leaning and the undergraduate curriculum' In (eds.) J. Garnett, C. Costley and B. Workman, Work Based Learning: Journeys to the Core of Higher Education, Middlesex University Press.

Ballard, B. & Clanchy, J. (1997) *International Students: A Brief Guide for Lecturers and Supervisors*, IDP Education Australia, Deakin.

Bassey M. (1990) *'On the nature of research in education, part 1. Research Inelegance'*, BERA Newsletter, 1990 (36):35-38.

Bell, J. (2014) *Doing Your Research Project: A guide for first-time researchers.* UK: McGraw-Hill Education.

Briggs, C. L. (2002) Interviewing, power/knowledge, and social inequality. In Gubrium, J. F. & Holstein, J. A. (Eds) Handbook of Interview Research, pp. 911 – 22, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Biggs, J. B. (1991) Approaches to learning in secondary and tertiary students in Hong Kong: Some comparative studies. *Education Research Journal, 6*, 27 – 39

Biggs, J. B. (1996) Western misconceptions of the Confucian-heritage learning culture. In Watkins, D. A. & Biggs, J. B. (Eds.), *The Chinese learner: Cultural, psychological and contextual influences (*pp. 45 – 67). Hong Kong/Melbourne: Comparative Education Research Centre/Australian Council for Educational Research.

Biggs, J. B. & Watkins, D. (1996) The Chinese learners in retrospect. In A. D. Watkins & J.

B. Biggs (Eds.). *The Chinese learner: Cultural, psychological and contextual influences* (pp. 269 – 285). Hong Kong/Melbourne: Comparative Education Research Centre/Australian Council for Educational Research.

Blaxter, L. (2010) *How to research.* UK: McGraw-Hill Education.

Boud, D. & Costley C. (2007) From project supervision to advising: new conceptions of the practice. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 44(2), pp. 119-130.

Boud, D. & Miller, N. (1996) *Working with Experience: Animating Learning.* Routledge.

Boud, D. & Solomon N. (Eds. 2001*)* Creating a work-based curriculum. *In Work-based learning: A new higher education.* Buckingham: Open University.

Boud, D. & Solomon, N. (2001) *Work-based learning: a new higher education?* UK: McGraw-Hill Education.

Brennan, L. (2005) *Integrating Work-based Learning into Higher Education: A Guide to Good Practice*: *A Report by the University Vocational Awards Council.* University Vocational Awards Council.

Bruan, V. & Clarke, V. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, Vol. 3(2), 2006

Bryman, A. (2008) *Social research methods.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Burnard, P. A., Dragovic, T., Ottewell, K., & Lim, W. (2018) Voicing the professional doctorate and the researching professional's identity: Theorizing the EdD's uniqueness, *London Review of Education.* 16 (1), pp. 40-55. Available at: https://doi.org/10. 18546/ LRE. 16.1.05 [Accessed 15 July 2017].

Caffarella, R.S. & Barnett, B.G. (1994) Characteristics of adult learners and foundations of experiential learning. *New directions for adult and continuing education,* 62, pp. 29-42.

Census and Statistics Department. (2011) *Hong Kong Annual Digest of Statistics.* The Government of the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong.

Census and Statistics Department. (2012) *Hong Kong Annual Digest of Statistics.* The Government of the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong.

Chan, K. & Elliot, R.G. (2002) Exploratory study of Hong Kong teacher education students' epistemological beliefs: Cultural perspectives and implications on beliefs research. *Contemporary Education Psychology*, 27, 392 – 414.

Chan, S. (1999) The Chinese learner a question of style. *Education + Training*, Vol. 41 Nos. 6/7, pp. 294-304.

Cheng, H. Y., & Guan, S. Y. (2012) The role of learning approaches in explaining the distinct learning behaviors presented by American and Chinese undergraduates in the classroom. *Learning and Individual Differences*, *22*(3), 414-418.

Cheng, K.M., Oleksiyenko, A. & Yip, H.K. (2010) *Impact of financial crisis on higher education: The case of Hong Kong*. UNESCO.

Chisholm, C.U., Harris, M., Northwood, D.O. & Johrendt, J.L. (2009) The characterisation of work-based learning by consideration of the theories of experiential learning. *European Journal of Education,* 44(3), pp. 319-337.

Collins, A., Brown, J.S. & Holum, A. (1991) *'Cognitive apprenticeship: Making thinking visible'.* American Educator, 15(3), pp. 6-11.

Collins, A., Brown, J.S. & Newman, S.E. (1989) Cognitive apprenticeship: Teaching the crafts of reading, writing, and mathematics. In *Knowing, learning, and instruction: Essays in honour of Robert Glaser*, 18, pp. 32-42.

Confederation of British Industry (CBI). (2010) *Ready to grow–business priorities for education and skills, Education and skills survey 2010*. London: Confederation of British Industry.

Corrie, S. & Lane, D.A. (2010) *Constructing Stories, Telling Tales: Case Formulation in Psychology*. London: Karnac Books.

Costley, C., Abukari, A. & Little, B. (2008) *Literature review of employee learning.* York: The Higher Education Academy.

Costley, C. & Lester, S. (2012) Work-based doctorates: professional extension at the highest levels. *Studies in Higher Education*, 37(3), pp. 257-269.

Costley, C. & Portwood, D. (Eds. 2000) *'Work Based Learning and the University: New Perspectives and Practices'*. In: Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA), pp. 67-71.

Costley, C., Elliott, G. & Gibbs, P. (2012) *Doing Work Based Research*. London: Sage.

Costley, C; Shukla, N; & Inceoglu, *Work Based Learners' Engagement with The University: An Exploratory Study*. Institute for Work Based Learning, London 2009

Creswell, J. W. (2005) *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research.* New Jersey: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Creswell, J.W. and Plano Clark, V.L. (2011) *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. 2nd Edition, Sage Publications, Los Angeles.

Cribbin, J. (2010) The Lifelong Learning Sector and the Development of Hong Kong as a Regional Education Hub: Is Government Policy Rhetoric or Reality. *International Education Studies* 3(4).

Cribbin, J. (2011) Education reform in Hong Kong. *Higher Education Reform in China: Beyond the Expansion*, p.139.

Cribbin, J. & Kennedy, P. *Lifelong Learning in Action.* Hong Kong: The University of Hong Kong Press.

Cunningham, I. & Dawes, G. (2004) The Handbook of Work Based Learning. Gower.

Dahlin, B. & Watkins, D. (2000) The role of repetition in the processes of memorising and understanding: A comparison of the views of German and Chinese secondary school students in Hong Kong. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 70,* 65-84.

Dearing, R. (1997) *The Dearing Report,* The National Committee of Enquiry into Higher Education.

Denzin, N. (*1978*) *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Denzin, N. K. (2006) *Sociological Methods: A Sourcebook,* pp. 339-357. New York Routledge.

Dewey, J. (1963) *Experience and education.* New York: Collier/Macmillan

Dowling, M. (2006) Approaches *to reflexivity in qualitative research.* Nurse Researcher

Eaves, M. (2011) The Relevance of Learning Styles for International Pedagogy in Higher Education. *Teachers and Teaching*, 17(6), 677–691.

Economic and Social Research Council. (2005) *Postgraduate training guidelines*, Swindon.

Edwards, D., & Potter, J. (1992). *Discursive psychology*. London: Sage

Education Bureau. (2018) *Non-local Higher and Professional Education Courses Statistical Information*. Available at: https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/edu-system/ postsecondary /non-local-higher-professional-edu/stat-info/index.html [Accessed 01 June 2018]

Education Commission, HKSAR. (1999) *Review of education system: Framework for education reform-Learning for life.* Hong Kong: Government Printer.

Education Commission, HKSAR. (2000) *Learning for life: Learning through life – Reform proposals for the education system in Hong Kong.* Hong Kong: Government Printer.

Education Services Australia. (2014) *Preparing Secondary Students for Work: A framework for vocational learning and VET delivered to secondary students.* Education Council.

Entwistle, N. (1997) Contrasting perspectives on learning. In Marton, F., Hounsell, D. & Entwistle, W. J. (Eds.), *The Experience of Learning. Implications for Teaching and Studying in Higher Education*, 2nd ed. Scottish Academic Press. Edinburgh, pp. 3 – 22.

Evans, K., Guile, D. & Harris, J. (2009) *Putting Knowledge to Work: The Exemplars. WBL Centre for Excellence.* London: University of London.

Finn, M., Walton, M., & Elliott-White, M. (2000) *Tourism and leisure research methods: data collection, analysis, and interpretation.* Harlow: Longman.

Forestier, K., Ilieva, J., Course, S. & Cheung, J. (2013) *'Transnational education in Hong Kong: Undergraduate student perceptions'*, International Journal of Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning, 6(1), pp. 57.

Fuller, A., Hodkinson, H., Hodkinson, Phil., & Unwin, L. (2005) Learning as peripheral participation in communities of practices: a reassessment of key concepts in workplace learning. *British Educating Research Journal*, 31

Garnett, J. (2005) University Work Based Learning and the Knowledge driven project, in Work Based Learning. In Rounce and Workman (eds), *Health Care*, Chichester: Kingsham.

Garnett, J. (2009) *Contributing to the intellectual capital of organisations*. London: Middlesex University Press, pp. 226-237.
Garnett, J., Costley, C. & Workman, B. (2009) *Work based learning: journeys to the core of higher education,* London: Middlesex University Press.

Garrison, R. (2000) Theoretical challenges for distance education in the 21st century: A shift from structural to transactional issues. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 1(1).

Gibbons, M., Limoges, C., Nowotny, H., Schwartzman, S., Scott, P. & Trow, M. (1994) *The New Production of Knowledge: The Dynamics of Science and Research in Contemporary Societies*. London: Sage

Gibbons, M. (1998) *Higher education relevance in the 21st century.* Washington, DC: World Bank.

Gibbs, G. (1992) *Improving the quality of student learning: Based on the Improving Student Learning.* Project funded by the Council for National Academic Awards. Technical and Education Services.

Gibbs, P. (2015) *Transdisciplinary Professional Learning and Practice.* Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.

Gill, J. & Johnson, P. (2010) *Research methods for managers.* London: Sage Publications.

Gosling, D. (2008) *Supporting student learning: A handbook for teaching and learning in higher education.* Routledge, pp. 131-149.

Greenholz, J. (2003) Socratic teachers and Confucian learners: Examining the benefits and pitfalls of a year abroad. *Language and Intercultural Communication,* 3(2), 122-130.

Grix, J. (2010) *The foundations of research*. Macmillan International Higher Education.

Guba, E.G. (1990) *The paradigm dialog.* London: Sage Publications.

Hager, P. (1998) Recognition of informal learning: challenges and issues. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training,* 50(4), pp. 521-535.

Harman, K., *Costley*, C. & *Inceoglu, I. (2011) Constructing the professional doctorate: 'what counts' for academic advisers.*

Herr, K., & Anderson, G. L. (2005) *The Action Research Dissertation: A Guide for Students and Faculty.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Haller, C., Fisher, R. & Gapp, R. (2007) Reflection as a means of understanding: Ways in which Confucian Heritage students learn and understand organisational behaviour. *Multicultural Education & Technology Journal,* 1(1): 6–24.

Helyer, R. (Ed.) (*2010*) *The work-based learning student handbook.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Helyer, R. & Garnett, J. (2016) How does work base learning fit into higher education. In

Helyer, R. (Ed.) (2016) *Facilitating Work-Based Learning A Handbook for Tutors*. Macmillan Education, pp.13-32.

Helyer, R. (2015) Learning through reflection: the critical role of reflection in work-based learning. *Journal of Work-Applied Management*, 7(1), pp. 15-27.

Hofstede, G. (1986) *Cultural differences in teaching and learning. International Journal of Intercultural Relations,* 10(3), pp. 301-320.

Holmberg, B. (1977) *Distance Education; a Survey and Bibliography.* London: Kogan

Holmberg, B. (1999) The conversational approach to distance education. *The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning,* 14(3), pp. 58-60.

Itin, C.M. (1999) Reasserting the philosophy of experiential education as a vehicle for change in the 21st century. *Journal of experiential Education*, 22(2), pp. 91-98.

Jin, L. & Cortazzi, M. (1998) Dimensions of dialogue: large classes in China. *International Journal of Educational Research, 29,* 739-761.

Johnson, R., Onwuegbuzie, A. & Turner, Lisa. (2007) Toward a Definition of Mixed Methods Research. Journal of Mixed Methods Research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research.* 1. 112 -133.

Kennedy, P. (2002) Continuing education in Hong Kong: policy rhetoric and policy reform. In: J. Cribbin and P. Kennedy (Eds), *Lifelong Learning in Action*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press

Kennedy, P. (2002) Learning cultures and learning styles: Myth-understanding about adult (Hong Kong) Chinese learners. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 21(5),* 430-445.

Kennedy, P. (2004) The politics of 'lifelong learning' in post-1997 Hong Kong. *International Journal of Lifelong Education,* 23(6), pp. 589-624.

Kirschner, P., Clark, R. & Sweller, J. (2006) Why Minimal Guidance During Instruction Does Not Work: An Analysis of the Failure of Constructivist, Discovery, Problem-Based, Experiential, and Inquiry-Based Teaching. *Educational Psychologist,* Vol 41.

Knowles, M. (1975) *Self-Directed Learning: A Guide for Learners and Teachers*. Chicago, IL: Follett Publishing Company.

Kolb, D.A. (1984) *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development.* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

Kvale, S. (2002) *Dialogue as oppression and interview research.* Nordic Educational Research Association Conference, pp. 7-9

Kvale, S. (2006) Dominance through interview and dialogues. *Qualitative Inquiry* I 2 (3): 480 – 500.

Lane, D.A. & Corrie, S. (2009) Does coaching psychology need the concept of formulation. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, *4*(2), pp.195-208.

Lather, P. (2006) Paradigm proliferation as a good thing to think with: Teaching research in education as a wild profusion. *International journal of qualitative studies in education*, 19(1), pp. 35-57.

Lau, W.W. and Kan, F. (2011) Colonialism and secondary technical education in Hong Kong: 1945–1997. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, 63(2), pp. 171-189.

Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991) *Situating learning in communities of practice. Perspectives on Socially Shared Cognition*, 2, pp. 63-82.

Lee, W. O. (1996) The cultural context for Chinese learners: Conceptions of learning in the Confucian tradition. In Watkins, D. & Biggs, J. (Eds.). *The Chinese learner: Cultural, psychological and contextual influences* (pp. 25-41). Hong Kong/Melbourne: Comparative Education Research Centre/Australian Council for Educational Research.

LeCompte, M. D., & *Preissle*, J. (*1993*) *Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research* (2nd ed.). New York Academic Press.

Lester, S. (2014) Professional standards, competence and capability. *Higher Education,* 4. 10.1108/HESWBL-04-2013-0005.

Lester, S. & Costley, C. (2009) Work-based learning at higher education level: Value, practice and critique. *Studies in Higher Education,* 35(5), pp. 561-575.

Leys, S. (1997) *The Analects of Confucius*. W.W Norton & Company, London.

Li, J. (2012) *Cultural Foundations of Learning: East and West*. Cambridge University Press.

Light, B. (2008) *Growing work based learning in Europe.* PhD. Middlesex University

Lin, J. (2012) *Cultural Foundations of Learning: East and West*, Cambridge University Press: 1st edition.

Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (1985) *Naturalistic Inquiry.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Lucas, B. (2010) *The Pedagogy of Work-related Learning.* A brief overview commissioned by the DCSF 14-19 Expert Pedagogy Group.

MacLean, D., MacIntosh, R. & Grant, S. (2002) Mode 2 Management Research. *British Journal of Management*, Vol. 13, 189 - 207

Maguire, K. (2019) in Costley & Fulton (eds. 2019) *Methodologies for Practice Research: Approaches for Professional Doctorates*. Sage

Malterud, K. (2001) Qualitative research: Standards, challenges and guidelines. *The Lancet* (358), pp. 483-488.

Manta, Y. (2011) Work-engaged learning: towards a paradigm shift assessment. *Journal Methods in Applied Settings,* Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Merriam; S. B. (2001) *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education.* Jossey-Bass 2001

Mezirow, J. (1991) *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. ERIC.

Merriam, S. (1998) *Qualitative research and case study applications in education.* 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publisher

Moore, M.G. (2013) The Theory of Transactional Distance. *Handbook of distance education*. Routledge, pp. 84-103.

Nespor, J. 1987 The Role of Belief in the Practice of Teaching. *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 19 (4): 317-328.

Newson, J. & Newson, E. (1975) Intersubjectivity and the transmission of culture: On the social origins of symbolic functioning. *Bulletin of the British Psychological Society*.

Nield, K. (2004) Questioning the myth of the Chinese learner. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 16(3), pp. 189-196.

Nixon, I. (Eds.) (2008) Work-based Learning Impact Study. Higher Education Academy

Noffke S. & Somekh B. (2009) *The Sage handbook of educational action research.* London: Sage Publications, pp. 155-165.

Nottingham, P. M. (2012) *An Exploration of How Differing Perspectives of Work Based Learning Higher Education Influences the Pedagogies Adopted*'. PhD. University of London

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E. & Moules, N. J. (2017) Thematic Analysis: Striving to meet the Trustworthiness Criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* Volume 16, 1 – 13 SAGE

On, L. W. (1996) The cultural context for Chinese learner/conceptions of learning in the Confucian Tradition. In Watkins, D. A & Biggs, J. B. (Eds.) *The Chinese Learner: Cultural*

Psychological and Contextual Influence, Australian Council for Educational Research, Hong Kong/Melbourne.

O'Reilly, D; Cunningham, L & Lester, S. (Eds. 1999) *Developing the capable practitioners*. London: Routledge.

Owens, R.G. (1987), *Organisational Behaviour in Education*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.

Oxford, R.; & Anderson, N. (1995). A cross-cultural view of learning styles. *Language Teaching*, 28, 201 – 215.

Pajares, M. F. 1992. "Teachers' Belief and Educational Research: Cleaning up a Messy Construct." *Review of Educational Research* 62 (3): 307-332

Patton, M.Q. (1999) Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. *Health Services Research*, 34(5), pp. 1189.

Penn, D., Nixon, I. & Shewell, J. (2005) *Research into Workplace Learning: North East Area Study*. Higher Education Funding Council for England.

Peter, R. & Hilary, B. (2008) *The SAGE Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice,* London: Sage Publications.
Peters, O. (1998) *Learning and Teaching in Distance Learning*. London: Kogan Page

Pettit, J. (2010) Learning to do Action Research for Social Change International. *Journal of Communication*, 4, pp. 820-827

Piaget, J. (1985) The Equilibration of Cognitive Structures: The Central Problem of Intellectual Development. Translated by Terrance Brown and Kishore Julian Thampy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Pomerantz-Zhang, L. (1992) Reform and Morden Chinese History. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Potter, R.A. (1992) Edward Schizohands: The Postmodern Gothic Body. *Postmodern Culture*, 2(3)

Raelin, J.A. (2008) *Work-based learning: Bridging knowledge and action in the workplace*. John Wiley & Sons.

Ramsden, P. (1992) *Learning to teach in higher education*, Routledge.

Reed, J. and Procter, S. (Eds. 1995) *Practitioner Research in Health Care: The inside Story.* London: Chapman and Hall

Resnick, L.B. (1987) *Education and learning to think*, National Academies.

Richard, D. (2012) *The Richard Review of Apprenticeships.* London: Department of Business, Innovation and Skills.

Robson, C. (2011) *Real world research*. Wiley; 3 editions.

Roger, C. R. (1969) *Freedom to Learn: A View of What Education Might Become.* Columbus, OH: Merrill.

Roger, G. T. & Lehman, D. R. (2002) Learning Considered within a Cultural Context – Confucian and Socratic Approaches. *American Psychology*, February 2002, Vol. 57, No.2, 89 – 99.

Salili, F. (2001) Teacher-student interaction: Attributional implications and effectiveness of teachers' evaluation feedback. In Watkins, D. A. & Biggs, J. B. (Eds) *Teaching the Chinese Learners: Psychological and Pedagogical Perspectives*, Australian Council of Educational Research, Hong Kong/Camberwell.

Sanders, M; Lewis, P; & Thornhill, A. (2007) *Research Methods for Business Students*; Prentice-Hall, London

Schön, D. (1983) *The reflective practitioner: How practitioners think in action.* London: Temple Smith.

Schön, D.A. (1987.) *Educating the reflective practitioner*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Seagraves, L., Osborne, M., Neal, P., Dockrell, R., Hartshorn, C., & Boyd, A. (1996) *Learning in Smaller Companies. Final Report. Educational Policy and Development*, Scotland: University of Stirling.

Signorini, P., Wiesemes, R. & Murphy, R. (2009) Developing alternative frameworks for exploring intercultural learning: a critique of Hofstede's cultural difference model. *Teaching in Higher Education,* 14(3), pp. 253-264.

Sit, H. W. (2013) Characteristics of Chinese students' learning styles. *IPEDR-Language, Media, and Culture* II, 62(8), 36 – 39.

Smyth, A and Holian, R (1999) *The credibility of the researcher who does research in their own organisation: the perils of participant observation.* Paper presented at the Association of Qualitative Research Conference: Issue of Rigour in Qualitative Research, Melbourne, 6-10 July.

Spector, J. M. (2016) *Foundations of educational technology: integrative approaches and interdisciplinary perspectives*. Routledge.

Stephenson, J. (1992) Capability and quality in higher education in Stephenson, J. and Well, S (Eds.) *Quality in Learning: a capability approach in higher education.* London, Kogan Page

Tang, C. (1996) Collaborative learning: The latent dimension in Chinese students' learning. *The Chinese learner: Cultural, psychological and contextual influences*, 183-204

Tashakkori, A. & Creswell, J (2007) The new era of mixed methods. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 1:3-7.

The Government of the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong. (2002) *Chief Executive's Policy Address*, The Government of the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong.

The Government of the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong. (2003) *Chief Executive's Policy Address*, The Government of the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong.

The Government of the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong. (2009) *Chief Executive's Policy Address*, The Government of the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong.

Tight, M. (1996) *Key Concepts in Adult Education and Training.* Routledge, New York, pp. 24-33.

Tobin, G. & Begley, C. (2004) Methodological rigour within a qualitative framework. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, DOI: 10. 1111/j. 1265 – 2648.

Trade and Industry Department. (2012) *The Fact*, The Government of the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong.

Tynjälä, P. (2008) Perspectives into learning at the workplace. *Educational Research Review*, 3(2), pp. 130-154.

UNESCO. (2013) *Making Education a Priority in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Report of the Global Thematic Consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, UNESCO.

University Grants Committee. (2004) *Hong Kong higher education: To make a difference, to move with the times.* Hong Kong: Government Printer.

Venkatesh, V., Brown, S. A; & Sullivan, Y. (2013) Guidelines for Conducting Mixed-methods Research: An Extension and Illustration. *Journal of the Association for Information System*, Vol. 17, Issue 7, p 435 – 494

Venter, K. (2003) Coping with isolation: The role of culture in adult distance learners' use of surrogates. *Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning*, 18(3), pp. 271-287.

Vygotsky, L. (1978) *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes, 5291*, p.157. (M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman, Eds.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Walsh, A. (2007) An exploration of Biggs' constructive alignment in the context of work-based learning. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 32(1), pp. 79-87.

Wang, L. (2010) *Chinese postgraduate students in a British university: Their learning experiences and learning beliefs*. PhD. Durham University).

Watkins, D. A. (2000). Learning and teaching: A cross-cultural perspective. *School Leadership & Management. 20(2),* 161-173.

Watkin, D. A. & Biggs, J. B (1996) (Ed.) *The Chinese Learner: Cultural, Psychological, and Contextual Influences*. Published by Comparative Education Research Centre (CERC) & Australian Council of Educational Research (ACER)

Watkins, D. A. & Biggs, J. B. (2001) The paradox of the Chinese learner and beyond. In Watkins, D. & Biggs, J. (Eds.). *The Chinese learner: Cultural, psychological and contextual influences* (pp. 3-23). Hong Kong/Melbourne: Comparative Education Research Centre/Australian Council for Educational Research.

Wenger, E. (1998) *Communities of practice: learning, meaning, and identity*. UK: Cambridge University Press.

Wenger, E. ; McDermott, R. & Snyder, W. (2002). *Cultivating Communities of Practice* . Harvard Business Press.

White, M., Walton, M., & Finn, M. (2000) *Tourism and leisure research methods: Data collection, analysis, and interpretation*. Pearson Education.

Willig, C. (2013) *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology*. McGraw-Hill Publication (UK)

Wong, J. (2004) Are the Learning Styles of Asian International Students Culturally or Contextually Based? *International Education Journal* Vol 4, No. 4.

Yilmaz, K. (2013) Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative Research Traditions: epistemological, theoretical, and methodological differences. *European Journal of Education*, Vol. 48, No. 2, 2013

Yin, R.K. (1994) Case Study Research: Design and Methods (Applied Social Research Methods, Vol. 5). Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, CA. *Leadership & Organisation Development Journal*, *23*(8), p.2002.

Yorke, M. (2006) *Employability in higher education: what it is-what it is not*. York: Higher Education Academy.

Online Materials and Websites

Census and Statistics Department. (2016) *Population By-census - Census and Statistics Department Information*. Available at: https://www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub /so459.jsp [Accessed 20 May 2017]

Chartered Institution of Personnel and Development (CIPD). Available at: https://www.cipd.co.uk/learn/cpd/about. [Accessed 04 July 2017]

Costley, C. & Dikerdem, M.A. (2011) *Work based learning pedagogies and academic development,* Available at: http://eprints.mdx.ac.uk/8819/1/WBL_PAD.pdf [Accessed 15 October 2017].

Crockett, M. *An Introduction to Continuing Professional Development.* Available at: https://www.persee.fr/doc/gazar_0016-5522_2010_num_218_2_4662 [Accessed 10 July 2018]

European Training Foundation. (2013) *Work-Based Learning: Benefits and Obstacles*. Available at: http://www.etf.europa.eu/webatt.nsf/0/576199725ED683 BBC1257BE8005DCF99/$file/Work-based%20learning_Literature%20review.pdf [Accessed 18 February 2017]

HEA Subject Centre for Education. (2011) *ESCalate Themed Funding: Work Based Learning Grant Project Interim Report.* Available at: http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/14762/ 1/8445.pdf [Accessed 22 July 2017]

Higher Education Academy (2014) – Resource Guide. Available at: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/resources/independent_learning.pdf. [Accessed 02 July 2017]

Hong Kong Qualification Framework. Available at: https://www.hkqf.gov.hk/en /home/index.html [Accessed 05 May 2017]

Hu, G. (2002) Potential cultural Resistance to Pedagogical Imports: The Case of Communicative Language Teaching in China. *Language Culture and Curriculum,* 15:2, 93-105. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/0790831020866636. [Accessed 10 June 2019]

Leitch Review of Skills. (2006) *Prosperity for all in the global economy–world class skills, Final Report,* Available at: http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/6322/1/leitch_finalreport051206.pdf [Accessed 20th January 2018].

Lyons, F. & Young, D. (2008) *Supporting work-based learning.* The Higher Education Academy. Available at: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/wfd_listening_to_the_learners.pdf [Accessed 10 May 2018].

Middlesex University. (2012) *Middlesex University Strategic Plan 2012-17*. Available at: https://www.mdx.ac.uk /__data/assets/pdf_file/0025/49642/MDXStrategicPlan_2012-2017_updated_V3.pdf
[Accessed 01 March 2016]

Middlesex University. 2015. *Academic Strategy 2015-2017*. Available at: https://www.mdx.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0026/188027/MU_Academic_Strategy_2015-2017.pdf [Accessed 01 March 2016]

Wang, T. (2006*) Understanding Chinese Culture and Learning*. Paper Presented at the AARE Annual Conference, Adelaide 2006 Paper Code WAN06122. Available at: https://www.aare.edu.au/data/publications/2006/wan06122.pdf.
[Accessed 02 July 2017]

Wu, Q. (2015) *High Education* 70: 753. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-015-9865-y.
[Accessed 15 June 2017]